COSMOPOLITAN JUNE | JULY 2024

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JUNE | JULY 2024

My job is just... beach

Effortless vacay style = sorted

Your body, your rules

A celebration of queer self-love

The summer of Sabrina Carpenter

This interview proves that your crush is totally justified

Where are all the good men?

A serial dater's plea to the universe

The fight for choice

On the frontline of the abortion buffer zones

Glasto flu? I don't even know her!

How to survive festival season, according to actual doctors

THE No.1 WOMEN'S GLOSSY MAGAZINE

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COVER PHOTOGRAPHY: BRENDAN WIXTED
STYLING: CASSIE ANDERSON

Sabrina wears: jacket and skirt, both Louis Vuitton. Rings, Ohliguer

COSMOPOLITAN

What's the most worn item in your wardrobe?

I have an unhealthy relationship with ruffles; my denim ruffle shirt has been a staple for years. Shakespeare could never.

A striped T-shirt, always. I wrote an article in 2016 about my obsession and stand by it to this day.

I have an old scarf I got in Thailand that is my favourite thing I own. I break it out every winter.

I live in black Converse because trainer trends stress me out

My Phoebe Buffay-like faux fur coat! Spotted in an Essex charity shop for £15 – I've never had more compliments.

I can't stop wearing my vintage Dickies carpenter jeans. I bought them secondhand and they're so comfy!

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Crushing on Sabrina, p52

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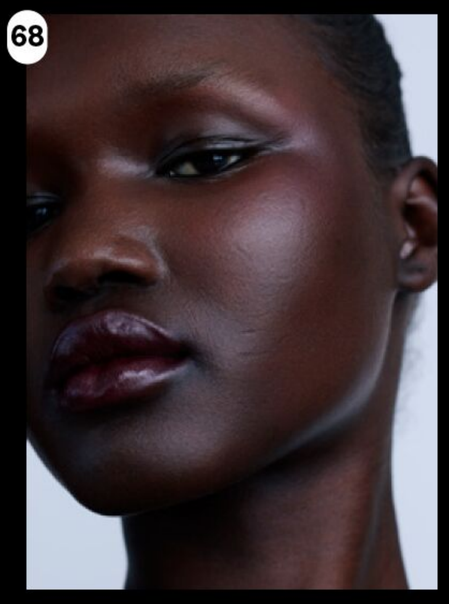

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Can't get enough of the Black beauty recs on p68? Visit cosmopolitan.com/uk/black-beauty for more insider advice from industry experts. Gatekeepers? Not us!

If you're wonderstruck by the megamoons on p47, we suggest you head on over to the *Cosmo* Brides collection for more must-read wedding content right away: cosmopolitan.com/uk/wedding-ideas

From the editor

It can feel strange having this page all to myself when so many other people work so hard at putting this magazine together. And never has that felt truer than now. Because as we wrapped up planning this issue, I floated off on cloud nine to get married and sun it up on the two-week honeymoon of my dreams. And dreamy it was. Until I was hit by one truly horrendous bout of pneumonia.

We landed back in the UK and, as time rolled on, I bounced from GP appointments to nights in A&E, constantly (but very naively) thinking I was mere days away from a miraculous return to full health. Yet, during those seven long weeks away, one thing I *didn't* have to worry about was *Cosmopolitan* still going to press on time, and you, our brilliant readers, still having an equally brilliant issue to read. And here it is... Musician of the moment Sabrina Carpenter gives us all the goss on *that* red-carpet romance and life with Taylor on *The Eras Tour* (p52); we celebrate the power of queer joy to tear up the self-love status quo (p76); and as the fight for our reproductive rights rages on, Anna Cafolla investigates the terrifying evolution of the anti-choice movement in Northern Ireland (p62).

It really does take a village. So, this is a thank you to my wonderful acting deputy editor Zoe and the rest of the *Cosmo* team for being the best, kindest, most talented bunch – now, and always.

Claire Hodgson
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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Mean Girls:
20 years later
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your fave writer
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play

Hello, summer of live music

Going to a gig never looked (or sounded) so good

WORDS: DUSTY BAXTER-WRIGHT

Taylor Swift

The Eras Tour **begins in the UK and Ireland on 7 June**

After months of watching *The Eras Tour* via TikTok, fans can take the journey through **Every. Single. Album** as TayTay finally touches down on UK soil. Time to get sparkled up and turn to p16 to find out which Era you're in. (*Reputation?* Us? We're saying nothing.)

Girls Aloud

The Girls Aloud Show **tour began on 17 May**

Girls Aloud are officially back, with 30 dates across the UK and Ireland. While there's no new music to look forward to, Nadine, Cheryl, Nicola and Kimberley are taking to the stage with a back catalogue of iconic tunes. Our 2024 favourites could never. It's the hottest ticket of the year.

Troye Sivan

Something To Give Each Other **tour begins in the UK and Ireland on 22 June**

Troye Sivan stans, assemble. All those hours spent learning the *Got Me Started* and *Rush* choreography in your bedroom are about to be put to good use, as the singer hits up venues across the country. We can feel the euphoria already.

Nicki Minaj

Pink Friday 2 World Tour **begins in the UK and Ireland on 25 May**

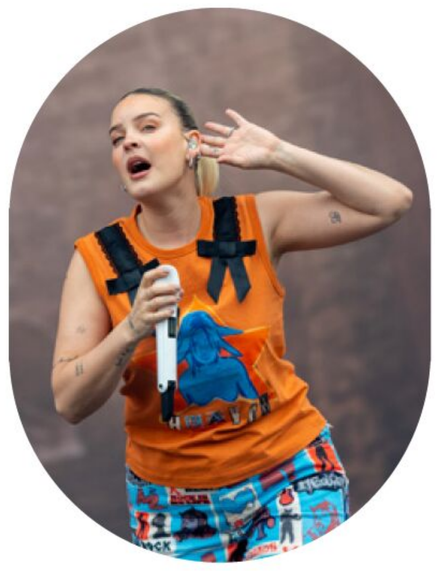
Nicki Minaj is back on tour after a five year hiatus, kicking off the European leg this May. Tied to her fifth album, *Pink Friday 2*, the tour will see the singer make her candy pink mark thanks to extravagant choreography, plus a headline slot at this year's Wireless festival.

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY, NETFLIX, MOVIESTILLSDB, HBO

Busted

Busted's UK shows began on 11 May

2023 saw Busted reunite for their 20th (!) anniversary tour, and Charlie, Matt and James are on the road again this summer, playing venues and festivals across the UK. The trio promise reworked versions of their hits (yes, 'Year 3000' is still a bop) alongside new singles such as 'One Of These Days'.



Anne-Marie

***The Unhealthy Club Tour* begins in the UK on 20 June**

Off the back of last year's album *Unhealthy* (which featured actual Shania Twain), Anne-Marie is bringing the good vibes this summer. Performing at open-air venues and festivals across the country, expect high energy and mood-lifting bangers from the solo singer.

Burna Boy

Burna Boy performs at the London Stadium on 29 June

For one night only, Grammy-award winner Burna Boy is bringing the *I Told Them...* Tour to London, playing at West Ham's stadium. Promising high-energy Afrobeats, his last UK gig had guest appearances from Dave, Stormzy and J Hus, so fans are expecting big things.

+ your must-see TV and movie releases ↓

Buying London
The UK version of *Selling Sunset* is here, based at an estate agent in England's capital. On Netflix 22 May.

***House Of The Dragon* season two**
Rhaenyra and Daemon face off against Aegon II, as the Targaryen war begins. On Sky Atlantic and NOW from 17 June.

Supacell
Set in south London, this sci-fi drama is fronted by an all-Black leading cast. On Netflix 27 June.

The Bikeriders
Austin Butler and Tom Hardy star as part of a motorcycle gang that turns sinister. In cinemas 21 June.

A fetch oral history of the original *Mean Girls*

For its 20th anniversary, the cast and crew come together to unpack one of the most iconic films of our time

WORDS: OLIVIA BLAIR

The year is 2004 and your mum has just dropped you at the cinema to watch *Mean Girls*. In exactly 93 minutes' time, you and your BFFs will be asking each other, 'Is there... alcohol in this?' and committing to wearing pink-only outfits every Wednesday for the foreseeable future.

Thanks to its relatable portrayal of secondary school politics, teenage cliques and laugh-out-loud one-liners, the film quickly became a mainstay in the female experience. Set in North Shore High, *Mean Girls* tells the story of a school dominated by 'The Plastics' (a girl group led by kingpin Regina George, aka Rachel McAdams), whose reign is threatened when transfer student Cady Heron (Lindsay Lohan) is invited into the inner circle.

In the 20 years since its release, no other film has captured a generation in quite the same way. From annually taking over our Instagram timelines ('It's October 3rd') to acting as music video inspiration for Ariana Grande, it's also been adapted for the Broadway stage and even used as ammunition during an American presidential election race. *Saturday Night Live* cast member Tina Fey wrote the script, which was partly

inspired by the self-help parenting book *Queen Bees And Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends, And The New Realities Of Girl World* by Rosalind Wiseman. The film was produced by *SNL* creator Lorne Michaels.

To celebrate the milestone, we spoke to the film's director, casting director and supporting cast to get the lowdown on how it really happened. Grool.

MARK WATERS (DIRECTOR): The first script I read had sexual commentary as well as a lot of profanity. We stripped all that stuff out as we were making a movie primarily marketed to females aged 12 to 25. My favourite line is the one we fought hardest to keep because the ratings board wanted us to cut it. Tina wrote a very eloquent letter to the Motion Picture Association of America accusing them of sexism, and they eventually let us have it. It was when Bethany Byrd says, 'I can't help it if I have a heavy flow and a wide-set vagina.'

STEFANIE DRUMMOND (BETHANY BYRD): It became this big thing over time with social media. As the years have gone on, everywhere I go I'm the wide-set vagina girl.

WATERS: We thought Lindsay [Lohan] was going to be Regina because Tina and Lorne loved *Freaky Friday* but we were trying to find a Cady and couldn't. Rachel [McAdams] came in and she was incredible but a bit too old for Cady. When we did the testing, I found that when Rachel came into the room, Lindsay got quite nervous. She was intimidated by her as Rachel was older and was a serious actor. It did something to Lindsay that I liked.

MARCI LIROFF (CASTING DIRECTOR): We wanted Blake Lively for Karen, she came down to the final tests. We had a difficult time casting Gretchen Wieners – Ashley Tisdale auditioned but didn't come down to the finals. There was a certain type of desperation for Gretchen, that you really felt for her. Finally, Lacey [Chabert] came in and just got it on the very first take.

'I did a screen test with Lindsay and made her blush'

JONATHAN BENNETT (AARON SAMUELS): I did a screen test with Lindsay and I made her blush on camera. I remember thinking, 'Oh my gosh, I just booked this job,' but came to find out they hired someone else.

WATERS: There was another actor – whose name I won't mention – who was cast as Aaron. He'd had a great audition but came to the table read, sat with his nose in the script and mumbled the whole way through. By the time it was over, Lorne came over to me and said, 'We're going to have to go with that other guy.'

Filming took place in Toronto, Canada. Most of the lead actors had been cast in America, but many supporting roles were given to local actors, who were able to put their own twist on the characters.

DANIEL FRANZESE (DAMIAN): At the beginning of the song *Beautiful* by Christina Aguilera, she says, 'Don't look at me.' I asked Tina if I could use it [for Damian] and she was like, 'Yeah. Let's do it.' I also begged them to be able to say, 'I want my pink shirt back.' That was something I made up and they loved it.

RAJIV SURENDRA (KEVIN G): Before I did my rap, Tina pulled me aside and gave me a pep talk about how rapping was really important to my character; it's not a joke to him and it's his moment to shine. Tina, Amy [Poehler] and Lindsay took a video in their

Regina George's cut-out top = the easiest Halloween costume ever

hotel room of Amy doing the rap with Tina and Lindsay beatboxing. They were doing it to show me the vision, and it actually helped.

JAN CARUANA (EMMA GERBER): I remember my character being put in the 'girls who eat their feelings' group, which was hard because no one wants to be known as that person. But the genius of Tina is that later in the film she basically says, 'You can't make yourself feel better by making other people feel worse.' That's a perfect message. I didn't feel exploited and no one ever made me feel bad, which is a testament to how nice it was to work on that set.

Behind the scenes, many of the cast would hang out and form genuine bonds, which also extended to the writers and crew.

BENNETT: I was really close with Daniel and Lizzy [Caplan, who played Janis]. Lacey and Amanda [Seyfried, who played Karen] were best friends. I threw a Halloween party in my hotel room – different to the one in the film. I went as Peter Pan.

SURENDRA: It was a very relaxed filming experience. The most famous person was Lindsay because of *The Parent Trap* and *Freaky Friday.*

DIEGO KLATTENHOFF (SHANE OMAN): Lindsay was terrific, she was so professional and would just knock it out on every take.

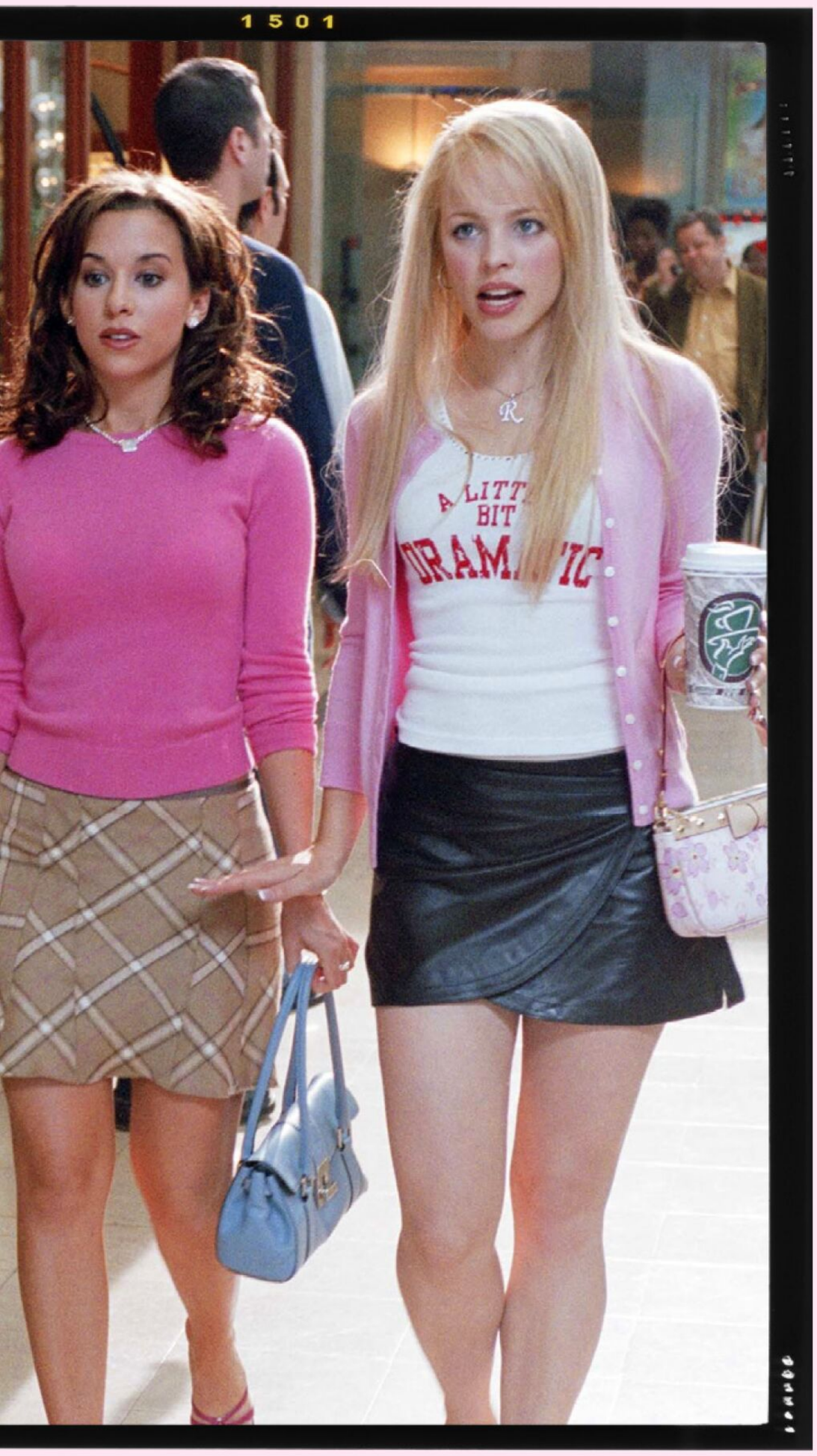
'I threw a Halloween party in my hotel room'

I remember Rachel talking about the movie she had just finished filming, which was *The Notebook.* That and *Mean Girls* came out and were smash hit number ones. She was a star right away.

DRUMMOND: I once ate lunch with Tina and Amy as I was one of the only supporting actors on set that day. We had really good conversations. It didn't ever feel divisive, I've been on sets [since then] that were far more divisive.

Mean Girls opened in US cinemas on 30 April 2004, before later being released in the UK on 18 June. It went to number one at the box office, garnering multiple award accolades and ultimately grossing $130m (£101m) worldwide.

WATERS: The week before, *13 Going On 30* with Jennifer Garner was released, which had a much bigger budget and marketing push



Mean Girls is now streaming on Prime Video

behind it. People thought it was going to crush us. Instead, we crushed them.

FRANZESE: I lived next door to an all-girls school, which I'd never noticed before. I had to pretty much move because every time I walked out the house when school was starting or finishing they surrounded me and wanted my autograph. They would follow me home and set up outside the building.

SURENDRA: I was still at school and didn't know how to handle gaggles of girls coming up to me, asking if I was in *Mean Girls.* When I said yes, they stood there giggling. If someone interrupted me in a restaurant, asking me to do the rap, I didn't know what to do.

Despite the movie being 20 years old, it remains a cultural phenomenon – and leaves an impressive legacy – which its cast are proud to have been a part of.

KLATTENHOFF: I was shooting [2013 thriller series] *The Blacklist* and there was a production assistant who, because it was cold, had a hoodie on tied around her face and big sunglasses on. As I walked past, I heard the other PAs go, 'She doesn't even go here!' and they all cracked up.

BENNETT: Being in Ariana Grande's *thank u, next* music video [which was *Mean Girls*-themed] was such a treat. When I put on the shirt and they straightened my hair, I looked in the mirror and it was like seeing an old friend.

FRANZESE: On the film's 10th anniversary, I came out because I got a letter from a fan who said that when he was in the eighth grade, he was tortured for being a 'sissy'. In ninth grade, the movie came out, and on the first day of school, the senior girls said, 'You're like Damian, come sit with us.'

DRUMMOND: It resonates with everyone. My granny watched it and said it reminded her of her women's group at church. She was probably Regina George. The film exploded on social media – I'm now a meme. I kind of get a kick out of it and it makes me laugh.

FRANZESE: We were the first meme-able movie. As long as there's the internet, *Mean Girls* is relevant.

PHOTOGRAPHY: ALAMY, GETTY, MOVIESTILLSDB.COM

Which Taylor Swift era are you in?

Swifties, it's time... *The Eras Tour* is *finally* coming to the UK. To mark the moment, take our quiz to find out which era matches your current mood

WORDS: FURVAH SHAH

1. Where are you most likely to be found on a Saturday night?
a Underneath a disco ball, dancing the night away
b Snuggled up eating a home-cooked meal with my partner
c Thinking of smart ways I can show my ex I've moved on
d Somewhere I probably shouldn't be (the less said, the better)

2. What's your favourite season?
a Winter, because it's the social season
b Autumn, for cosy vibes
c Spring, for new beginnings
d Summer, with its warm, carefree days

3. Where's your dream holiday destination?
a Mykonos or Marbella, because I like to party hard
b A serene staycation in a sleepy village
c Anywhere far away from here
d New York, of course

4. How do you deal with your problems?
a Um, I don't. It's me, hi, I'm the problem, it's me
b Hide away under my duvet
c Journal about the person who caused them
d Handle the confrontation head on

5. Which Taylor lyric speaks to you the most?
a 'Karma's gonna track you down'
b 'When you are young, they assume you know nothing'
c 'The story of us might be ending soon'
d 'Darling I'm a nightmare dressed like a daydream'

Mostly As

Midnights

You're a free spirit who might recently be out of a long-term relationship or casual situationship, and living your best life.

Mostly Bs

Folklore

You're a quiet, cosy night-in type who can think of nothing better than spending quality time with someone special. Pass the duvet.

Mostly Cs

Speak Now

You're in your unsettled era, and that's totally okay. Whether it's a big life change or you're not quite where you want to be, you're working on it.

Mostly Ds

1989

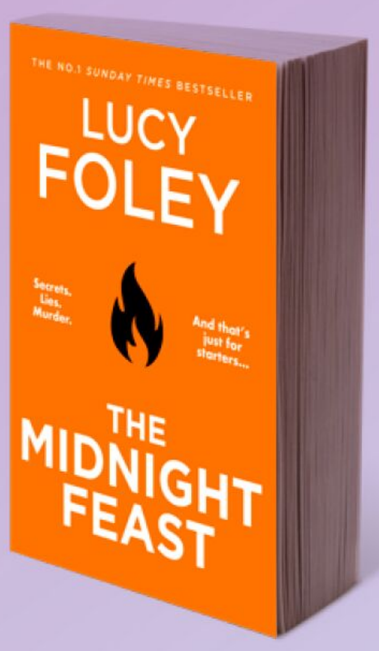
You're all about trying new things and exploring different places. Whatever it is, your best friends are always by your side.

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY

PSA: your favourite author is back

New novels from our go-to writers are now hitting the shelves. But how do their second, fifth or 36th book (we're looking at you Harlan Coben) compare to the classics? Team *Cosmo* finds out

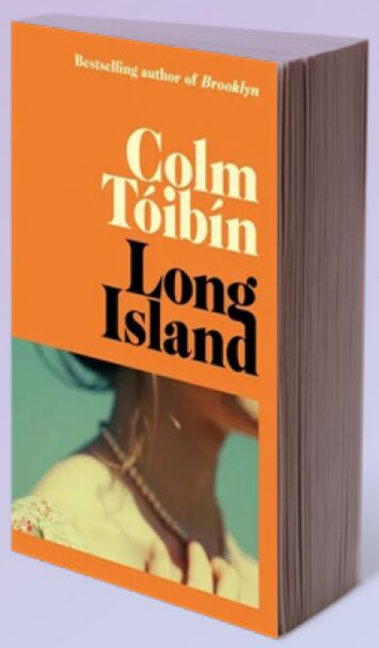
COMPILED BY: LYDIA VENN



The Midnight Feast by Lucy Foley

Out 6 June

The opening of a controversial wellness resort on the Dorset coast doesn't go to plan when secrets start to emerge and a body is found. Told in non-chronological order, it follows the same formula as *The Guest List*. But this story feels elevated beyond Foley's previous work.
Alexandria Dale, fashion writer



Long Island by Colm Tóibín

Out 23 May

This sequel revisits the characters from *Brooklyn*. When a man knocks on Eilis' door, it sets in motion a series of events that bring her face-to-face with her past. *Long Island* is a relatable, witty and hugely poignant look at what it means to be happy.
Hannah Connolly, acting social media producer

Blue Sisters by Coco Mellors

Out 23 May

A year on from the death of their beloved Nicky, the three remaining Blue sisters return to New York to sort her belongings. It's a simple yet absorbing plot and Mellors' voice feels more confident than in *Cleopatra And Frankenstein*.
Lydia Venn, senior entertainment and lifestyle writer

FROM THE NO. 1 AUTHOR AND CREATOR OF THE HIT NETFLIX DRAMA FOOL ME ONCE
Harlan Coben
There's no such thing as the perfect murder
THINK TWICE

Think Twice by Harlan Coben

Out 23 May

This is Coben's 12th novel in the Myron Bolitar series. It sees the talent agent back in business and cleaning up one of his famed client's messes. Some dialogue is questionable, but I think that comes with the 'bad guys vs good guys' genre. It's easy to follow and had me hooked.
Jennifer Savin, features editor

Lies And Weddings by Kevin Kwan

Out 20 June

Rufus is an aristocrat whose family are secretly drowning in debt. He has a choice – does he seduce a rich heiress at his mother's demand or confess his love for the girl next door? It's as good as *Crazy Rich Asians,* but even more ridiculous and hilarious.
Furvah Shah, junior writer and editorial assistant

Not In Love by Ali Hazelwood

Out 11 June

In true Ali Hazelwood fashion, *Not In Love* delivers on the NSFW reading content; it's hot, it's angsty, it's tense. It involves a forbidden romance between a scientist and a businessman. What it comes down to? Where do one's loyalties lie?
Lia Mappoura, beauty assistant

◆ Turn to page 108 for an exclusive extract from the novel

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Um, wtf is air-con doing to our skin and hair?
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glow

Hands up if you've been forgetting to apply SPF to these areas

Raises hand and instantly reaches for sun protection

WORDS: ELENA CHABO

PHOTOGRAPHY: STOCKSY

Fortunately public knowledge about the importance of SPF seems at an all-time high, and so it should be. We've never been so clued-up when it comes to the health risks of sun damage, and how to protect ourselves from skin cancers and melanoma. But what about areas that, despite our best efforts, we don't always pay enough attention to? We asked sun damage expert Kimberley Medd, clinical lead at Face the Future – who sees the results of long-term neglected areas every day in her clinic – to bring you this comprehensive checklist of all the areas we might accidentally be missing...

Ears

Positioned to get a lot of sun exposure, but one of the most frequently missed body parts, ears are a common risk area for skin cancer. Always spread your face SPF right over the front, top and back of the ears. This also ensures the perimeter of your face isn't forgotten.

Eyes

SPFs can irritate eyes, but avoiding the area increases the risk of pigmentation around and on the eyelids. Instead, use a targeted SPF eye cream and dab it carefully around the eyelids and beneath your lower lashes, rather than sweeping over the eye. Try Ultrasun SPF30 Eye Protection, £20.

Lips

The thinner skin on and just around the lips makes them one of the most susceptible spots for sun damage. Oh, and did we mention burned lips can trigger cold sores? No thanks. Opt for an SPF lip balm, such as Ultra Violette's Sheen Screen Hydrating Lip Balm SPF50, £16.

Scalp

A high-risk sunburn spot, particularly in any areas without a lot of hair, or along your partings and hairlines. Sprays can work best here, see Coola's Scalp & Hair Mist SPF30, £29, which doubles up as a hair colour protectant, too.

Neck and chest

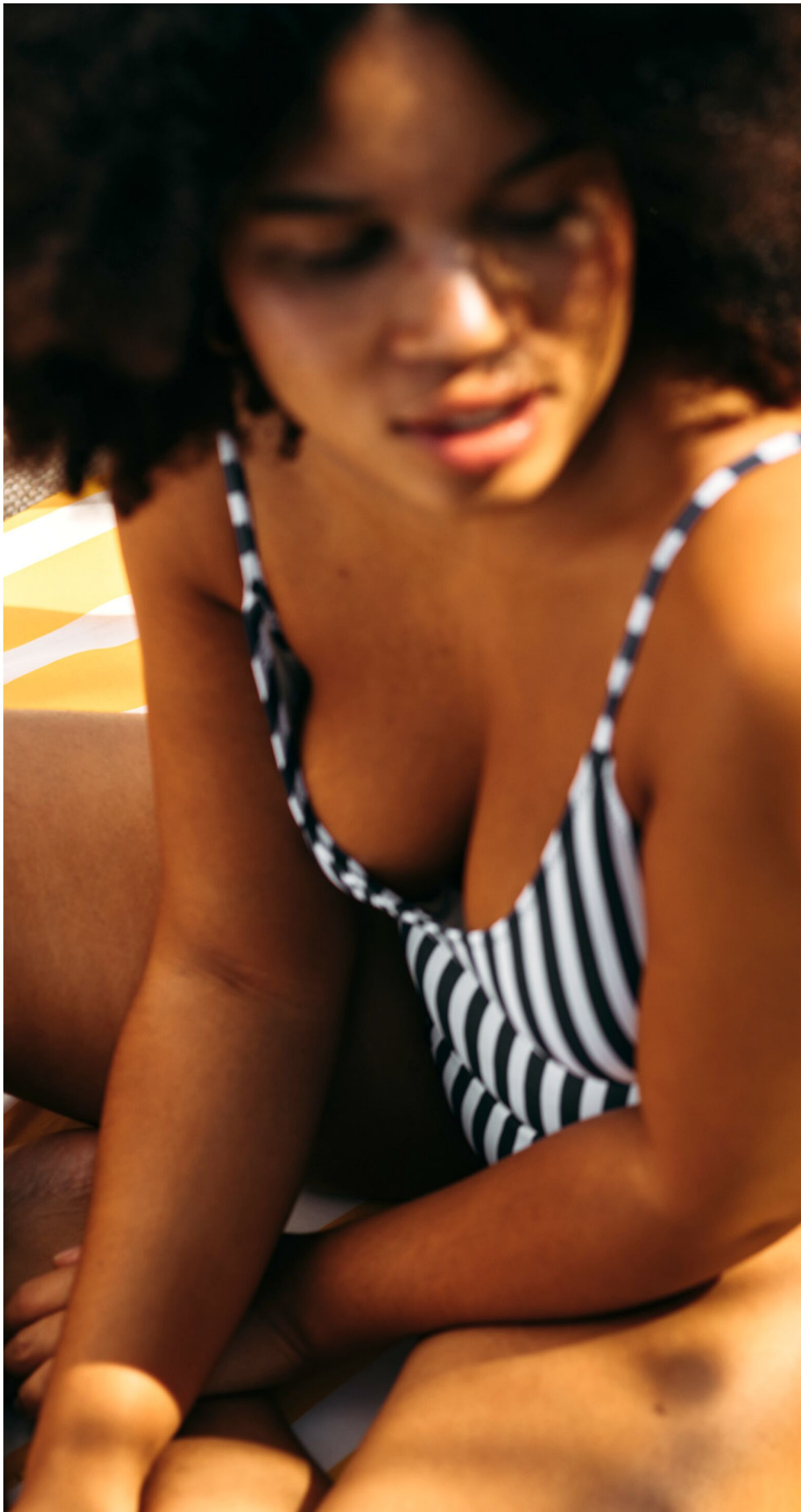
The neck and chest have thin skin prone to damage and accelerated ageing, so wherever our necklines drop, our face SPF has to as well! And don't miss the back of the neck, particularly if you wear your hair up.

Hands

A prime location for sun damage and age spots, hands are exposed to UVA year-round, yet are an often forgotten area. Top-ups are essential on this busy, sweaty and frequently washed area. Use waterproof SPF, and keep a mini spray or non-greasy cream in your bag for reapplying.

Feet

When the tops of the feet and toes are neglected, sandal lines are the least of our worries. Like all frequently exposed areas, they're particularly vulnerable to sun damage. Use plenty of high-factor SPF, and compensate for all the sweat and movement that rubs it off with top-ups.



‘Public knowledge about the importance of SPF seems at an all-time high. We’ve never been so clued-up when it comes to the health risks of sun damage’

The reapplying rulebook

Always reapply every two hours, or more often if you are perspiring a lot, swimming or doing outdoor activities.

Focus on areas you touch more, or where you perspire; hairline, nose, hands, feet.

Over-makeup sprays offer top-up protection without ruining your glam, but if spending a long time in direct sun, you should reapply your main SPF.

What's in the [h]air for

1

LATTÉ BRUNETTE

Multidimensional shades of rich blonde and brunette are in and, as a result, we're going to see more people dyeing their hair darker this season,' says celebrity hairstylist Mitchell Ramazon. The hybrid look fuses the best of both worlds, resulting in a blended latté colour.

Pro tip: Opt for a demi-permanent hair dye when going darker – it's a good rule of thumb for upkeep and creating a natural diffusion of colour once your roots grow out.

Pro tip: A small-tooth comb is going to be your BFF for teasing extra height and volume into the hair.

2

VINTAGE GLAM BOUFFANTS

2023 saw a rise in the sleek ballerina bun, but this season is all about undone 1960s glam, Ramazon predicts. Think: big bouffants, romantic soft curls and tousled half-up, half-down dos. Basically, go big or go home.

3

MY LITTLE PONY

Instead of the long ponytails that have dominated lately, this is shorter and bouncier. 'It's whimsical, retro and the perfect marriage between the Barbiecore and *Mob Wives* aesthetics,' says celebrity hairstylist Clay Hawkins. Bonus points if you wrap the elastic in velvet or ribbon.

Pro tip: Lather the ends in a nourishing hair oil for extra shine and a doll-like finish. We recommend the Hair by Sam McKnight Love Me Do Nourishing Shine Oil, £32.

PHOTOGRAPHY: IMAXTREE, GETTY

summer?

New season = new hair trends and we have the intel on the styles that are about to dominate your feeds. Are you taking notes?

WORDS: LIA MAPPOURA

4

THE TUMBLR SIDE PART

Inspired by our blogging foremothers of the late 2000s and early 2010s, this style is all about parting your hair as far to the side as you possibly can. As Hawkins puts it, 'Teen YOLO vibes are just what the doctor ordered!'

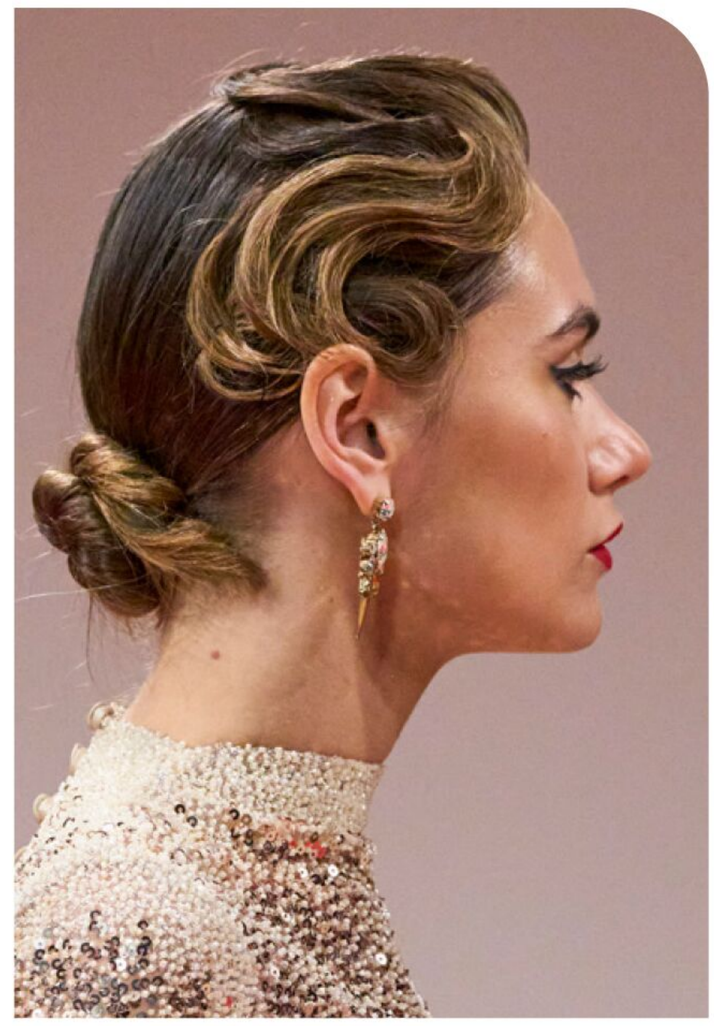
Pro tip: When changing your parting, use a trusted texturising spray to help guarantee a firm hold. We recommend the Living Proof Dry Volume & Texture Spray, £31.

Pro tip: Start with feathering the layers from the collarbone down to try the style out with minimal commitment.

5

FEATHERED LAYERS

Staying strong through the summer season are feathered layers, confirms hairstylist and trend forecaster Tom Smith. The style not only offers a flattering face-framing finish, but is combined with practicality for minimal upkeep. 'Trimming and keeping the delicate hairline area tidy makes this the perfect, natural-looking choice for those with hair breakage and/or regrowth,' Smith says.



Pro tip: Use a strong-hold hairspray that leaves no residue or flakes behind. We recommend the Andrew Fitzsimons Hard Strong Hold Hairspray For Maximum Control, £10, for a polished finish.

6

PASTRY HAIR

What happens when you mix origami, croissants, pretzels and hair? Well, you get a hair-a-gami style that's good enough to eat, of course! Not only are ^these sculptural updos showstoppingly good, they're also an elevated take on the classic (and somewhat overdone) chignon.

What the AC-tual F is air-con doing to our skin and hair?

Cooling systems could be behind some of your biggest beauty woes

WORDS: ELENA CHABO

Have you noticed changes to your skin and hair this summer, and can't figure out what's happening? There might be a surprising culprit: air-conditioning. A recent study* has found that here in the UK we have the fastest-growing demand for cooling systems in the world. We're an unlikely frontrunner, given our climate, but here we are.

If you've ever woken up in an air-conditioned hotel room, feeling dried out from nostril to lung, it's not hard to imagine how the cold air could be leaving more than our airways parched. And extreme temperature changes can also take a pretty big toll on skin and hair. We're used to spending winter switching from hot to cold, as we step out from central-heating-filled houses into the cold air, but now we're facing the reverse in summer. We enlisted consultant trichologist Samantha Stewart, and Sk:n dermatologist Dr Aiza Jamil, to find out exactly what we're up against...

'Dry air strips hair and skin of natural oils'

HAIR

The first signs

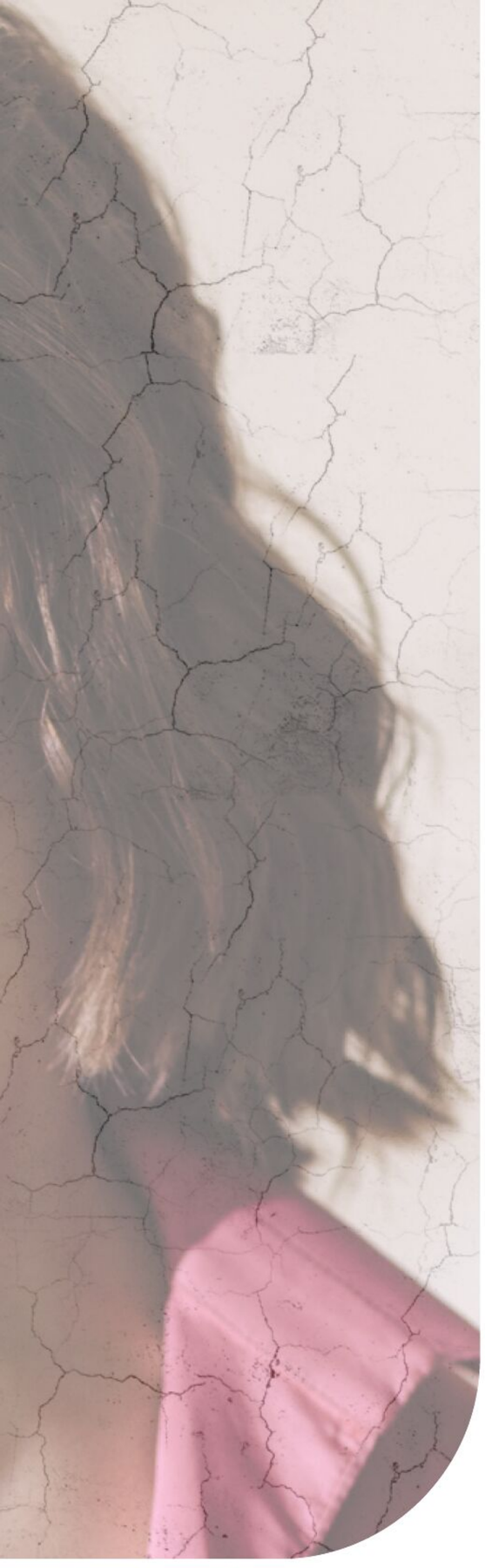
Okay, first things first, how do you know if AC is impacting your locks? Well, look out for dryness, increased frizz, static, extra breakage, knotting, an irritated scalp and dull, lifeless locks, advises Stewart.

But, why?

'The dry air circulated by air-conditioners can strip the hair and scalp of natural oils and moisture,' says Stewart. This causes strands to become 'brittle, dry and more susceptible to split ends and breakage'. Not ideal. It can also increase static, leading to frizz and flyaways. Frequently moving between warm and icy temperatures exacerbates the dryness, according to Stewart. 'Hot temperatures can cause hair to become dehydrated, while cold temperatures make hair contract and lose moisture,' she says. These fluctuations can also cause the cells of the cuticle (the hair's protective layer) to lift, compromising the structure, and making lengths vulnerable to damage, breakage and split ends. Those with naturally dry, fine or curly hair are particularly at risk.

Protection is key

As well as a hydrating haircare routine, using a humidifier to add moisture to the air will help prevent strands from drying out. You can also go back to basics and cover your hair with a hat or headscarf.



SKIN

The first signs
'If air-conditioning is affecting your skin, you'll notice various signs indicating its discomfort,' says Dr Jamil. 'Look out for increased dryness, irritation, itching, peeling, flaking, breakouts, or even an increase in fine lines and wrinkles.'

But, why?
The issue is that AC typically reduces humidity in the air. 'Dry air can strip the complexion of its natural oils and draw out moisture, leading to dehydrated skin,' says Dr Jamil. Air-conditioning can also trigger eczema flare-ups, particularly if you're prone to sensitivity. If a Sahara-dry complexion wasn't enough, when your skin is dry, it may also begin to produce more sebum to compensate, contributing to clogged pores and acne. And if you're switching between hot and cold temperatures, your pores will also likely be dilating and contracting, trapping dirt and oil, adding to the likelihood of breakouts. At this point, we'll take the sweat patches.

Protection is key
A humidifier will help counteract moisture-zapping AC, while drinking lots of water and moisturising skin well will keep your complexion hydrated and glowing. Switch to a moderate temperature setting on your air-con to reduce the impact, and take breaks from AC environments, which will allow your skin to adjust to natural conditions. Hot-girl walk, anyone?

YOUR REPAIR KIT
When skin is dry and irritated, it's important to moisturise frequently with hydrating, repairing products, and opt for a gentle cleanser, such as The Ordinary Squalane Cleanser (£8.30). If you're having acne breakouts, look for exfoliating AHA/BHAs, such as salicylic acid, to clear pores and dead skin. Don't avoid moisturising, as that will make skin drier and could lead to more acne. Talk about a backfire.

The Ordinary
Squalane Cleanser, £8.30 for 50ml

YOUR REPAIR KIT
Has the damage been done? Using a deep conditioner or hydrating mask once or twice a week can restore and lock in moisture. We love Hair Gain's Nourishing Miracle Treatment Mask (£14.50). Avoid hair-stripping sulphates in shampoos, and consider a leave-in conditioner to suit your hair type (lighter for fine hair, richer for dyed or textured hair), which can be locked in with an oil. Breakage isn't reversible, but a good trim will help lengths to recover.

Hair Gain
Nourishing Miracle Treatment Hair Mask, £14.50 for 50ml

PHOTOGRAPHY: LEANDRO CRESPI/STOCKSY, SERGE FILIMONOV/STOCKSY *NATURE ENERGY JOURNAL

Beauty lab

Liquid blush

Get a royal flush with these silky, foolproof formulas

WORDS: CHARLOTTE BITMEAD

1

2

3

1. NARS AFTERGLOW LIQUID BLUSH, £33
The Nars Orgasm shade in liquid form? I couldn't get it on my face fast enough. Unlike the OG, this has a more subtle sparkle, as well as hyaluronate (a sister to hyaluronic acid) and collagen, which not only makes blending a breeze but also adds hydration and glow. Finally, a fake orgasm we can all get on board with.

2. URBAN DECAY HYDROMANIAC BLUSH GLOW HYDRATOR, £25
This takes 'liquid blush' to a whole new level with its jelly-like texture; if you're in the dry skin club, this is going to be your perfect match. My skin drank this marula oil-rich stuff up, leaving behind an impressively natural faux flush with just a smidge of product. Cheeks are left looking so juicy, you'll want to take a bite out of them.

3. E.L.F. CAMO LIQUID BLUSH, £7
For those of us with oilier complexions and who want a more matte finish, this should be our top pick. It provides skin with a soft filter effect and isn't a struggle to blend, either, leaving behind a bright pop of colour. It didn't last as long as others, but for under a tenner, you really can't fault it.

4

5

6

4. VIEVE SUNSET BLUSH BALM, £21
If dusky hues are your bag, these lightweight balms are the way to go. Not only do the muted hues provide a cherub-worthy flush, you can dial up the pigment from subtle to Queen of Hearts in no time. It provides such a flawless sheen, your cheeks will look more plumped in the process. Just remember to set with powder so it sticks around.

5. SAIE DEW BLUSH, £20
Barbie called; she wants her blush back. Yes, the bubblegum pink shade of 'Cool Baby Pink' is *chef's kiss*, but the real winner here is the doll-like skin as a result of its dewiness. The water-based formula melts in, making your blush look natural in just a few taps of your fingers. The best part? It's easily buildable, so you can customise your blushing experience.

6. CHARLOTTE TILBURY PILLOW TALK MATTE BEAUTY BLUSH WAND, £30
The cushion applicator makes it foolproof to apply on the go (earning serious brownie points) and only two dots were needed to give the 'cold girl' make-up trend a run for its money. The matte finish means this is budge-proof and leaves no shimmer behind, so if you despise anything glittery, you'll love these.

How to get sweet cheeks

Here, Vieve founder and make-up artist, Jamie Genevieve shares her tips for the perfect fresh flush.

Placement is key

'Don't apply blush on the apples of the cheeks, start towards the backs of your cheekbones. This means the first touch of blush (which is always the most pigmented) won't be near the middle of your face, but on the high point of your cheeks; instantly lifting and sculpting your face.'

Layers are best

'Apply sheer layers and build up for your desired intensity. It's easy to add product but taking it away can be tricky. Apply a tiny amount of blush and blend over your temples, eyes, nose and chin – it sounds scary, but it ties the whole look together.'

Don't forget to set

'Using a cream blush and then setting it with powder in a similar tone will add dimension to your cheeks, while locking in your blush colour until you wash it off.'

It’s more than just a microchip. It’s a lifelong ticket home.

If your cat goes missing, it can feel like you’ve lost a member of your family.
By microchipping your cat, you’re giving them the best chance of coming home.

Find out more about microchipping and the new law
set to come into force in England on 10 June.

cats.org.uk/microchipping

Cats Protection is a registered charity 203644 (England and Wales), SC037711 (Scotland) and is listed as a Section 167 institution by the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland. | BM_1572

Swimwear to suit everyone
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Say hey to our new Curve editor
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Australian musician G Flip talks fashion
Page 37

style

Warmer days ahead

The sun is *finally* setting at a respectable hour, we've busted out the fake tan and the puffer has been put away for another year. Summer is here, so's your new wardrobe...

COMPILED BY: MADDY ALFORD

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF URBAN OUTFITTERS

Easy-does-it dresses

Picnic in the park? Big night out? Office day? There's an all-in-one outfit solution for every date in the diary

1. £33.99, New Look **2.** £139, Bardot at Anthropologie **3.** £90, River Island **4.** £265, Rixo **5.** £100, Forever New **6.** £99.99, Mango **7.** £35.99, Pull&Bear **8.** £195, Pink City Prints **9.** £59.99, Mango **10.** £85, Damson Madder **11.** £50, River Island **12.** £99, Nobody's Child

Pretty things

Puff sleeves, ruffles, and bows lend a dreamy feel to summer's hero dresses. Will you go mini, midi or maxi? Now to choose the perfect sandal match...

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF RIXO

Cool and comfy

Raffia, rope, suede and leather are on our radar for stylish everyday sandals. Choose sleek silhouettes for the office or platforms for the weekend

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Sunday stroll

Where there's a dress for every occasion, there's a sandal for it, too; from smart leather picks to sporty outdoor kicks

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14

1. £15.99, New Look **2.** £50, River Island **3.** £170, Kiohne
4. £165, Sézane **5.** £35.99, Mango **6.** £38, Teva at Schuh
7. £115, Birkenstock **8.** £32.99, New Look **9.** £100,
Dr. Martens at Schuh **10.** £80, Gramicci **11.** £110,
Geox **12.** £90, Vagabond **13.** £35.99, Pull&Bear
14. £50, Oliver Bonas

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF NEW LOOK

1

2

Finishing touches

Sometimes the most exciting summer purchase is the final puzzle piece to your 'fit: the perfect beach tote, those sunnies that never leave your head, or that cute new necklace

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Colour pop

Nothing spruces up denim cut-offs like sunshine-bright accessories. From cherry-red bags to shiny beads and bangles, we're shopping for high-impact add-ons

10

7

13

9

8

1. Glasses, £60, lolla **2. Cap**, £23, New Era **3. Earrings**, £95, Astrid & Miyu **4. Bag**, £295, Strathberry **5. Cabin bag**, £195, Antler **6. Hat**, £4.99, TK Maxx **7. Bag**, £69, White Stuff **8. Necklace**, £70.99, Crystal Haze **9. Bracelet**, £250, Pandora **10. Ring**, £142, Good Daze **11. Bag**, £35, A World Of Craft at Arket **12. Necklace**, £65, Arket **13. Bag**, £25.99, Pull&Bear

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF RIXO

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The swimwear brands you need

From teeny 'kinis and size-inclusive swimsuits to lingerie-inspired designs, these brands

MONDAY SWIMWEAR

BFFs Tash Oakley and Devin Brugman found Instagram fame by taking photos of each other in bikinis, so launching a swimwear line of their own was a natural next step. Fast-forward 10 years and their brand, Monday Swimwear, is a go-to for fashion gals everywhere, thanks to its laid-back LA aesthetic, luxurious materials and impeccable fit.

YOUSWIM

At long last, swimwear that's designed to adapt to our ever-changing bodies rather than the other way around! Youswim's classic pieces come in just two sizes, but are all made from a pioneering fabric so flexible that it fits and flatters everyone from a UK 6 to 28. Genius, right? You might never have to buy another swimsuit again...

Best for inclusive sizing

DORA LARSEN

The much-loved London brand known for its colourful, super chic lingerie has *finally* answered fans' prayers and launched its first swimwear line. Its signature tulle and delicate lace details have been replaced by a more beach-appropriate Italian terry material, but the expert construction and beautiful, bold hues are Dora all over.

TONA

You can always count on a stylist to know what women really want to wear, and on the beach that's swimwear with a modern design and comfortable fit. Enter Tona Stell's bikini brand that offers exactly this, as well as a sustainable ethos, inclusive sizing and timeless styles that will look fresh and fab every season.

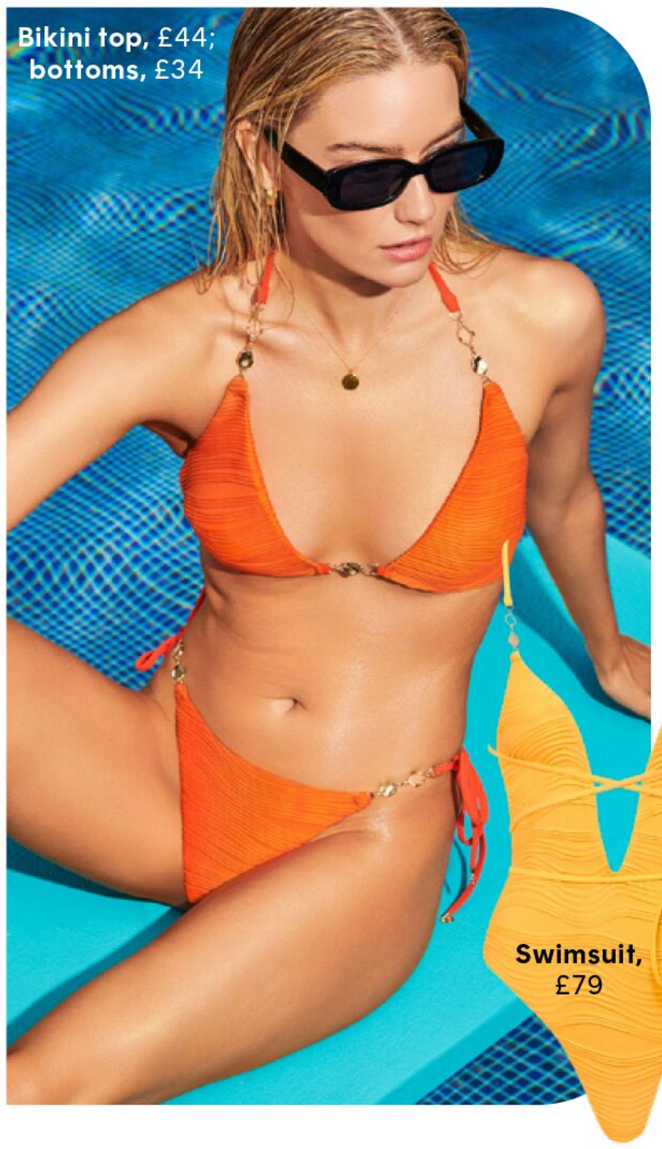
to know for a stylish summer

are about to up your beach game

WORDS: CLEMENTINA JACKSON

REFORMATION

Reformation is on a mission to create the most sustainable swimwear around. Crafted from regenerated Nylon leftovers and renewable fabric hailing from castor plants, this collection is as eco-conscious as it is chic. Think teeny red 'kinis, vintage florals, exposed bra details and sporty silhouettes, all oozing the brand's signature Cali cool.



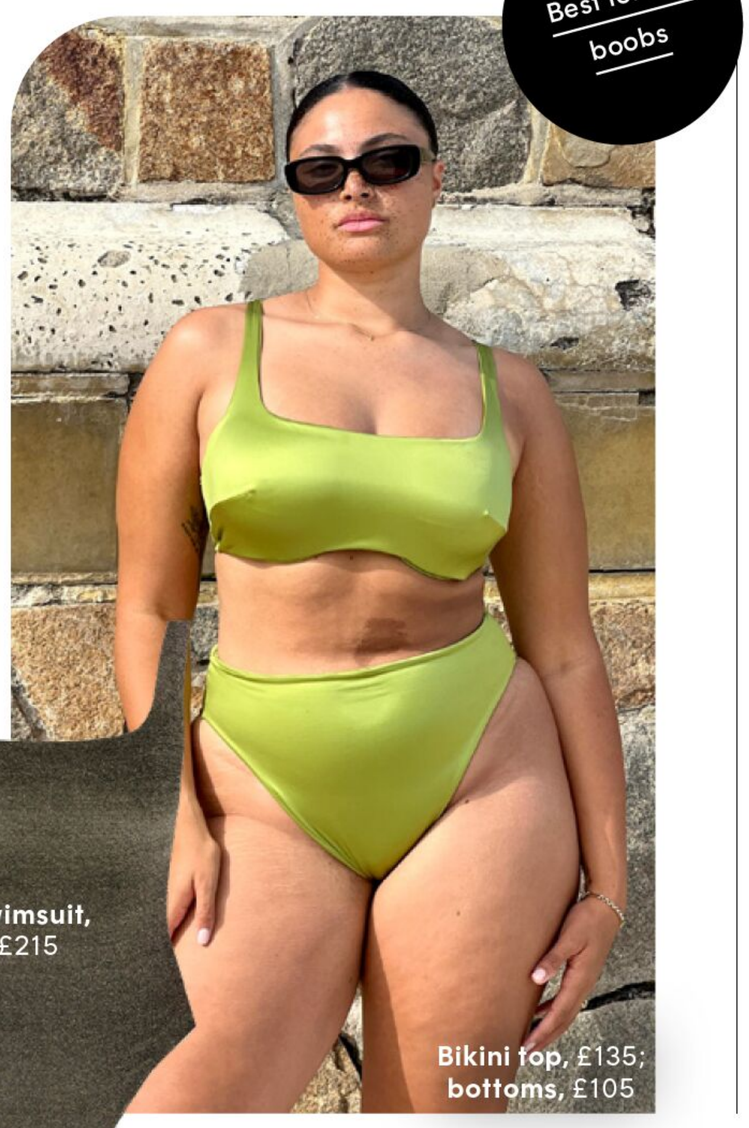
BLUEBELLA

If you prefer to travel light, make sure to pack a few of Bluebella's new one-pieces in your carry-on. With their textured fabrics, modern silhouettes, and luxe metal details, they're designed to work from beach to bar and beyond. Trust us, they'll end up being some of your most-worn pieces, and they're fabulously affordable, too.

FORM AND FOLD

Best for big boobs

Big-boobed babes, listen up! Your days of self-conscious swimwear shopping are finally behind you, thanks to this game-changing Aussie brand. Form and Fold's pieces are exclusively designed for D+ cups, using lingerie construction, premium materials and a fit process to ensure every single style is supportive and stylish AF.



AWAY THAT DAY

If you're after swimwear that's both sexy and sustainable, look no further than London-based brand Away That Day. All of its pieces are made using innovative planet-friendly fabrics that stand the test of time, and its ultra-flattering, mix-and-match bikinis are fast becoming a summer holiday essential.

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF THE BRANDS

Meet our new Contributing Curve Editor

Hi :) I'm Alessia Golfetto. I am a 23-year-old curve model, plus-size fashion and lifestyle digital content creator and, I guess now, a plus-size fashion columnist.

A born and raised fat girl, I wish I could say I've loved fashion since birth but, like most curvy girls, I always struggled to navigate the fashion world. With brands not seeing my worth early on, I made it my mission to make sure they do. So here is what my style looks like: fun, colourful, cool, sexy and slightly confusing (yeah, I'm a Taurus).

My main sources of inspiration have always been fashion trailblazers – you know, the ones rethinking mixtures of textures, colours, prints and shapes. You'll never find anything 'clean-girl'-related here!

As *Cosmo*'s new Contributing Curve Editor, I'll be bringing you the same vibes in all my content. We'll explore everything from affordability, to recreating straight-size looks and my personal favourite – smaller brands you absolutely need to know about.

I am so excited to write for a community that has been at the heart of everything I've done so far. I hope you enjoy my first piece as much as I enjoyed putting it together. Here are my six key items for a summer wardrobe I think every plus-size girl needs...

Lazy Oaf, £65

OVERSIZED GRAPHIC PRINT TEE

I hate tight clothes clinging to my skin in the summer, so you'll definitely be catching me in a print tee and mini skirt combo. Lazy Oaf will always take the crown for affordable graphic prints and sizes go up to 3XL.

Le Specs, around £77.23

Lexxola, £160

SUNGLASSES

Aside from protecting your eyes, I think we can all agree sunglasses can really make any outfit. I get overstimulated with black tinted glasses, so I opt for colourful tints.

ASOS, £28

MAXI SKIRT

This pick needs no explanation. You're gonna need one at some point, so just get it now. A flowy maxi skirt and some bangles will always win. And *whispers* you don't need to worry about your chafing shorts showing.

VEST TOP

This is my favourite 'not-so-lazy' lazy-girl piece. I have several in different styles and colours. I wear mine with everything from a cute pair of jeans to a flowy skirt, cargos or jorts. Also perfect for layering.

Zara, £8.99

MESH TOP

This isn't a summer staple, it's a heatwave staple! When you feel like wearing a bikini but don't want to feel too exposed, throw on a lace or mesh top. I love black at night and literally any other colour for daytime.

Monki, £19.99

FUNKY SANDALS

I adore an abstract-shape shoe. They elevate any outfit, especially when you play with colour. These Camper ones have been a favourite for ages; I love them styled with colourful socks for an elevated nighttime look.

Camper, £120

PHOTOGRAPHY: IMAGE COURTESY OF ALESSIA GOLFETTO

‘I haven’t worn a dress since I finished high school’

G Flip, the Australian non-binary musician and spouse to *Selling Sunset*’s Chrishell Stause, is touring the world with their *DRUMMER* album. Between sound checks, they riffed with *Cosmo* on all things androgynous style, from their wedding-day suit to gender-bending Halloween costumes

ON PEER PRESSURE

‘Growing up, I just wanted to dress like a boy, and no one really cares when you’re that young. But it’s different when you become a teenager. When I started Catholic high school, I was starting to suppress a lot of queer feelings, because I didn’t want to be bullied or ostracised. So when all the girls were having their Sweet Sixteen parties, I would just go into my sister’s room (she’s really feminine) and ask her to dress me. She would put me in some girlie skirt so that I could rock up to the parties and try to blend in. But I fucking hated it, it was literally just to conform, because I wasn’t able to be my true self. I haven’t worn a dress since I finished high school.’

SAYING ‘I DO’... OUR WAY

‘Do you know how much people stress over weddings? [Chrishell and I] have already had two weddings; we want to do one every single year. We keep it really small, only invite people a few days out, go somewhere random, and just wear whatever we have with us. So for our first wedding in Vegas, I just found my black suit and tie, and Chrishell happened to have this awesome white latex dress. To be honest, we put no thought into it – which removed all the planning stress and made it all about love.’

Chrishell and G Flip married last year

EMBRACING ANDROGYNY

‘I 100% struggle to buy clothes, and I know a lot of my non-binary and trans friends do, too. I’m quite a small little human, so if I go to the men’s section, everything is just too big and long. All my jeans are cut off with scissors. I struggle to find suits that fit me, and I know it’s the same for my friends with curvier hips and chests that don’t necessarily want to emphasise their shape. Bikinis are always so feminine, so I often end up wearing sports clothes at the beach; like a Nike sports bra, or even my Calvins if I can’t find the right bottoms. There’s definitely a gap in the market to address that.’

TROLLING THE TROLLS

‘I fucking love the fashion on *Selling Sunset*, it’s so entertaining. One morning Chrishell woke me up early to say bye before she had to go film, and she looked like the most beautiful angel in this white dress and flowing long hair. Some people watch the show just for the ‘fits! Chrishell and I have such different styles, but we still share all our comfy clothes and joggers, and she’ll steal my baseball caps. We’ve done a couple of gender-bending Halloween costumes, like when we dressed up as each other, or when I dressed up as Troye Sivan in drag and Chrishell wore a men’s prosthetic torso from Amazon. The whole time I’m dressed up as her, she just can’t breathe from laughing. Watching me try to open the microwave with taped-on fake nails... we crack each other up. The fans love it, but the trolls were so outraged by that. Like, guys, it’s Halloween, it’s just a costume!’

AS TOLD TO: MADDY ALFORD. PHOTOGRAPHY: MICHAEL WILSON/GETTY, CALLUM WALKER HUTCHINSON, NAZRIN MASSARO

CPB London

I'M ASKING FOR IT

LET'S CHANGE THE LAW
TO REQUIRE A CLEAR
YES TO SEX.

RIGHT TO EQUALITY

AFFIRMATIVECONSENT.UK

Inside your gut health
Page 40

Your ultimate festival survival guide
Page 43

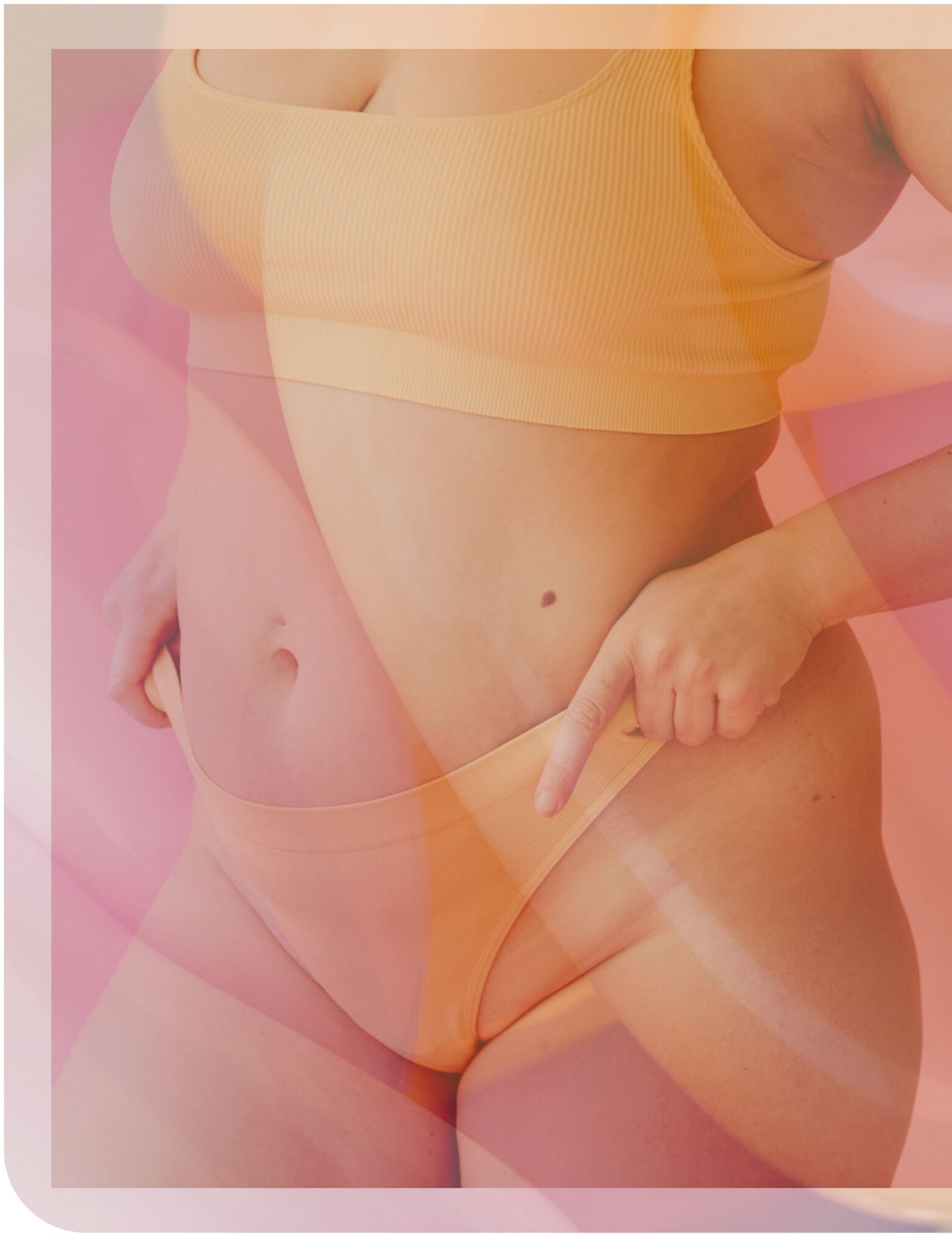
The secret to better fitness?
Page 44

thrive

Gut instinct: how we all went microbiome mad

Anyone for a big dose of colonising bacteria? Just us?

WORDS: HARRIET HALL



There had been signs: the communal fridge at the yoga retreat, filled with bottles of probiotics. The advert for dog food that promised to improve your pup's microbiome. The NYE dinner table conversation that turned to bloating remedies. Gut chat had entered the room. Is this simply where conversations go to die when you reach your thirties, or is something else going on?

In recent years we've obsessed over our sleep, our step counts, we've added varying blends of so-called health powders to our drinks and now we're turning our attention to our stomachs. Call it gut instinct if you will, but talk of our once taboo bodily functions has emerged from the bowels of society to take centre stage. Since January 2019, Google search data show a 370% increase in people seeking gut health advice and on TikTok over 925k posts address hacks and tips to improve your innards. GutTok offers up advice from the spurious (drinking olive oil) to the more expert. At the start of the year, searches for 'gut shot' on the Ocado website increased by 734% and when we polled our readers*, 88% of you said you cared about your gut health, with 43% avoiding certain foods for this reason and 26% taking probiotics to improve it. The bottom line? Le shit, c'est chic.

And thank goodness, because our tummies are in a bit of a state. In a 2021 survey† of over 73,000 adults, 40% reported gastrointestinal (GI) disorders, from bloating to constipation. In the UK alone, an estimated 13 million people suffer with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) according to the NHS, with one in every 123 people diagnosed with a form of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) such as Crohn's or ulcerative colitis. Medical experts aren't certain on why this is, but among the key factors that can contribute to gut malaise are genetics, poor diet, a lack of exercise and stress. Meanwhile, conversations around the health risks of ultra-processed foods have risen to the fore in recent years, with data suggesting that in the UK, they account for at least half of our diet.

Naturally, Big Wellness is ready to deliver us from evil, with numerous products hitting shelves that promise to de-bloat us and make us as regular as a metronome. It feels nigh on impossible to walk through a supermarket these days without being offered some sort of bowel benefit. Among the many adverts and press releases are products that promise to improve not only your digestion, but also your skin, mental health and even vaginal pH levels, via your intestines. And while there's increasing evidence to suggest that the power of the gut-brain axis could be an untapped route to mental health support, the other two? Well, the jury's out. Either way, our obsession with health has driven the global wellness economy to grow to $5.6tn (£4.42tn), as per data from 2022*, with gut health making up a not insignificant part of it. The global gut health supplement market was expected to reach $12,305m (£9,759m) by the end of 2023 as consumers become increasingly aware of the gut's impact on overall health. So, is it all about the money or is shotting, swallowing and macerating 'good bacteria' and 'gut-friendly' products really the silver bullet that will cure our insides once and for all?

The belly of the beast

Chris Probert, a gastroenterology professor at the University of Liverpool, puts our renewed interest in gut health in part down

Struggling to digest the dos and don'ts of gut health?

to a post-Covid health awareness. 'If you've got diarrhoea and you're working from home, no one notices. But put yourself back in the office and those symptoms become more of a burden. You've also had a chance to realise things are abnormal for you.' He sees the heightened social awareness of gut health as a positive, as it's working to shed previous taboos around common issues. 'It's become very acceptable to talk about life with gut problems. And people are destigmatising things like stoma bags. It's been helpful,' he says. But beyond these two factors, the rise in our colonic consciousness is largely down to the exponential pace of scientific advancements helping us better understand the gut and the role it plays in our wider health. 'We've got many laboratory tools at our disposal enabling us to generate data much more readily,' Professor Probert says. 'I can do more experiments for the same amount of money now than I could in years gone by.'

It seems that the science is moving faster than the scientists. While access to new data is vital, the complexity of the gut means that simply having more information about the organ isn't necessarily enough to do anything about it. 'The trouble,' explains Peter Whorwell, consultant gastroenterologist at the University of Manchester, 'is that we don't know what "normal" is, so when patients turn up with their stool analysis, I can't help them'. Professor Whorwell is referring to the host of private companies offering to analyse your microbiome if you pop them a faecal sample in the post. 'It's legitimate, it tells you all the bacteria you've got in you, but we can't say what it means – the public interest has overtaken the science. And that's the problem. The data are meaningless.'

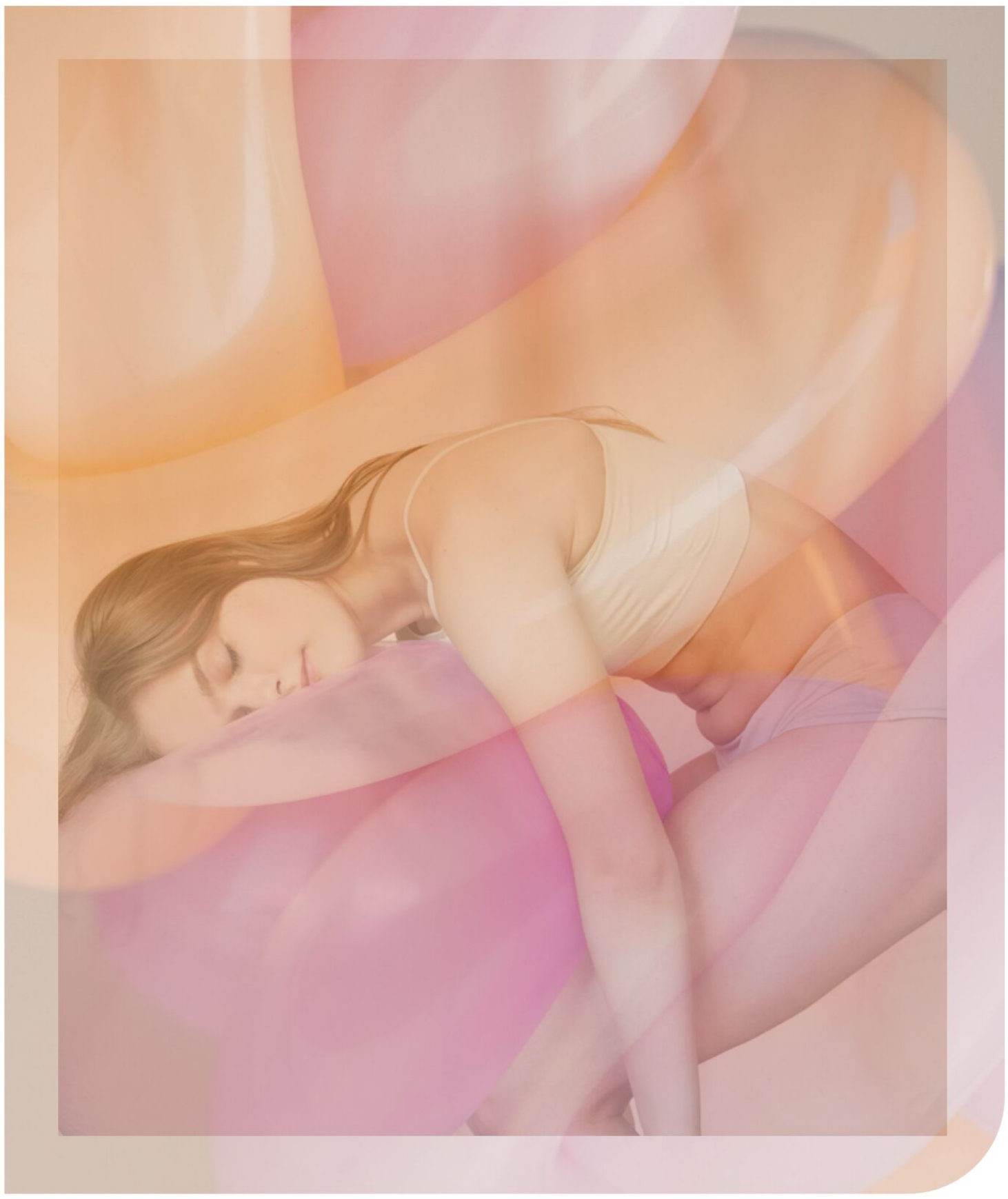
'The bacteria inside of you affect everything; they affect your immune system and your mood. If you're in a bad mood, your gut bacteria can change'

What the experts say

'Gut Microbiome', a word previously reserved for the science community, has now made its way into everyday gut-related chat. It describes the ecosystem of trillions of bacteria, fungi and viruses that live happily in our large intestine. 'The bacteria inside of you affect everything; your immune system and your mood. And interestingly, if you're in a bad mood, your gut bacteria can change,' says Professor Whorwell. In patients with IBS and IBD, that delicate ecosystem has become disturbed – and it's this that wellness companies are promising to put right for us. But can they really? Essentially, explains Professor Whorwell, everyone's microbiome is individual to them, so one set of results can only tell you what bacteria exist within you, not whether it's good or bad.

Anyone around since the early days of Yakult and Activia will remember the rise of the 'good bacteria' conversation – and since then, throwing a load of live culture into your system has become de rigueur for the health conscious. In recent years, this has developed into probiotics – bacteria that 'confers a health benefit upon the host', explains Professor Whorwell. But do we all need to be downing a gut shot before breakfast, and if so, where should we begin when it comes to selecting one in such a saturated market? On this, the experts are divided. For a probiotic to reach your gut intact, explains Professor Probert, it has various hurdles to overcome, including high levels of acidity in your stomach. If they do make it to the large intestine, they're joining a 'huge community of bacteria living in you and you're taking this little gloop of something and hoping to change the entire structure of that community. Really, most of the time, it's a drop in the ocean'. Despite my own protestations that my daily probiotic has improved my own IBD, he says, 'While there are a few patients who swear by them and there is a small percentage that are genuine responders, there's a chance it's a placebo.' He stands firm, 'There's no good evidence for any particular probiotic being *uniformly* helpful.'

Professor Whorwell is somewhat more optimistic about their validity, saying that, while 'it's still a case of trial and error, there's some evidence that suggests probiotics are good for your immune system'. And certainly, research has shown a promising response to probiotics in IBS and IBD patients and that probiotics have the potential to promote a healthy immune system (as much as 70% of our immune system is found in our gut). Professor Whorwell recommends patients take a probiotic during and after antibiotic use (which he says is akin to 'pouring bleach on your microbiome'). He has worked with several brands and won't endorse a particular one, but anyone interested selects one, takes it for four to six weeks



and if you haven't noticed any changes, try another one. Even if they don't work, you may be out of pocket but, 'The good thing is they don't do any harm. They're safe as houses,' he says.

For those wanting to try a probiotic, the experts align that it should offer a blend of several strains of bacteria that are ideally live upon consumption. Also, look for one that has had a control study conducted on its tolerability and the survivability of the bacteria.

Variety is the spice

So what does 'good' gut health look like? 'What we call "normal" is going to the loo somewhere between every other day to twice a day. If it's beyond that or if you're suffering with bloating after meals or getting regular mucus or blood in the stool or diarrhoea for more than six weeks, you must see a GP,' says Professor Probert. Don't go off and get your own tests. If we can, we should stop people going down an expensive rabbit hole. He also points to the charity Guts UK's website that has advice on symptoms. And despite what advertising would have us think, it seems that beyond expensive products, colonic irrigations or detoxes (both strongly advised against), the key to improving our general microbiome, outside of genuine medical concerns, lies not in a single shot, but in our wider diets. The good news is that, unlike with other health fads, improving your gut health is quite attainable and, thankfully, affordable.

'It's not just enough to eat vegetables, we need a range of plants for the body to function optimally'

'The microbiome is like a tropical rainforest,' explains Professor Probert. 'You've got life of different kinds, a diversity of plants, animals and insects, all this richness. What we find in diseased states is this diversity being suppressed.'

Jennifer Medhurst, a nutritionist and gut health specialist, puts it in layman's terms. 'It's not enough to just eat vegetables, we need a range of plants for the body to function optimally. People can be very restrictive in terms of what they choose to eat and just keep eating the same thing over and over again. But this is a mistake.'

Medhurst recommends introducing fermented foods such as sauerkraut, kimchi and kefir into your diet. While the research around the efficacy of fermented foods on supporting the microbiome remains limited, a study from 2023* found that people who ate six helpings a day saw the benefits. And Medhurst points to blue zones – the areas of the world where people live the longest and in which fermented foods, beans and legumes are a large part of the diet. 'If there was a drug that could cure numerous health conditions, the pharmaceutical industry would be all over it, and yet we have food but it's a very small part of the conversation,' she says.

Gabrielle Morse, a gut health specialist and registered dietitian at The Gut Health Clinic, agrees, adding that eating live yoghurts, more plants and having general dietary diversity can 'quickly see improvements in things like bowel movements, gut symptoms and energy levels'. Though she notes that fermented foods might not agree with everyone, so suggests introducing new things gradually and in small amounts. Morse also cautions against some of the gut shots on the market, including cider vinegar, which 'is not recommended as it can worsen upper gastro symptoms such as reflux' and emphasises that 'you can't detox the gut, and there's no need to'.

While it's no bad thing that we're now more open to discussing symptoms that we might previously have considered too awkward to talk about, we may be at risk of falling for marketing that promises something with little scientific backing. And though taking a probiotic is unlikely to do us harm, for those without gut issues, it may not be the best use of their money when a cheaper range of veg from our local Tesco is likely to have a greater impact.

PHOTOGRAPHY: STOCKSY, GETTY. *SOURCES: *GASTROENTEROLOGY*, GLOBAL WELLNESS INSTITUTE. †*COSMOPOLITAN* UK'S SURVEY OF 515 READERS

Whether you're a festival newbie or a hardened hippie, you'll know that what's about to go down on the campsite will be heavy-going on your body. But is there a way to party hard and recover quickly? We consulted the experts for the low-down.

Before the party starts

It's not just about planning the perfect 'fits; now's the time to build a solid sleep routine, says Hannah Shore, sleep knowledge and research manager at Silentnight. 'Establish a good routine a few weeks before by getting between seven to nine hours a night; your body will recover far quicker.' Getting your diet in shape now is also a good idea, explains Dr Anthony Hobson, clinical director at The Functional Gut Clinic, who urges festivalgoers to eat foods that will 'boost energy and immunity' in the run-up. 'Try kefir each morning. The bacterial strains will boost your resilience.'

When the music plays

Earplugs are essential if you want any chance of getting 40 winks, but even if you do manage to cap a decent number of hours, the quality is likely to be crappy. 'Sleep is when your muscles recover via protein synthesis,' Shore explains. 'If sleep quality is poor, your body effectively turns this process off, resulting in aches and pains.' She recommends you bring a blow-up mattress and a pillow to 'stop a build-up of pressure on your hips and shoulders. More comfortable sleep means better quality sleep'.

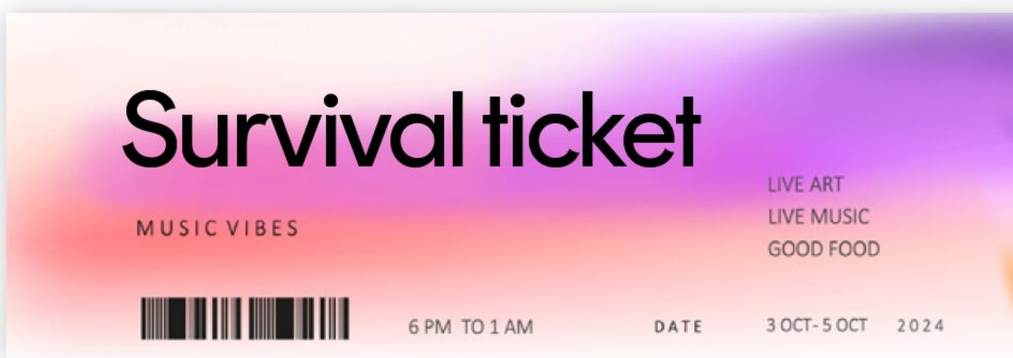
When it comes to booze and minimising the immediate effects (well, the nasty ones), gut microbiome expert Dr Alasdair Scott says preparation is key. 'Alcohol increases urination and heightens body temperature, which cause a hangover.' Add in a sweaty tent and you better make sure you stay hydrated and keep some paracetamol on hand. But, it's true what they say about lining the stomach. Dr Scott says you can reduce the severity of a hangover by having a full meal an hour before drinking to slow down alcohol absorption.

When the party's over

Several nights' (attempted) sleep in a tent, alongside all the walking and dancing, will leave your muscles feeling sore. Physiotherapist Ernesto Mendez recommends stretches alongside topical gels for immediate pain relief. 'Try gentle leg swings to ease muscle tightness and the classic yoga cat-cow pose.'

Your gut, which will feel inflamed after several days of booze, will also need a little TLC. 'Drink plenty of water and eat small meals with seven-hour breaks between them so your gut can do some maintenance,' Dr Hobson says. 'Try some chicken or halloumi kebabs in pitta bread. This is a low-fat mix of protein and vegetables. Avoid onions and garlic if you bloat and stick to chilli sauce, which stimulates gut blood flow and can be protective.'

Unfortunately, there's no real hack to speed up the relief of post-festival pain. However, Dr Scott does remind us of the power of the placebo effect. 'If you think something's going to help, it probably will.'



WORDS: KIMBERLEY BOND. IMAGES: ADOBE STOCK

Your best workout ever? These tests claim to have the secret

From DNA-informed fitness to blood-type diets, staying healthy just got a whole lot more personal...

WORDS: JENNIFER SAVIN

Once upon a time, eating your five a day and fitting in a semi-regular jogging session felt like enough. Now? Darling, don't you want to live for ever? Step it up! Alongside witnessing a boom in extreme biohackers (TLDR: millionaire YouTubers spending thousands trying to reverse biological ageing through hundreds of daily supplements, intense eating regimes, fitness and... plasma infusions), us Average Joannes are also becoming increasingly drawn to personalised approaches when it comes to health. Something that the wellness set has dubbed as achieving 'optimal' health – in order to lengthen our 'longevity'. But what are these shiny new alternatives that demand data to create your plan? Is this the death of 'one-size-fits-all' fitness guidance? I decided to trial three contenders for three weeks each to learn more...

What: A DNA workout

Tell me more: The brainchild of Samantha Decombel, a genetics scientist, FitnessGenes involves spitting in a tube in exchange for reports promising to 'unlock' information about your insides – and tips on how to hack any hurdles. It also takes lifestyle factors into account. After all, genes respond to the environment we build around them. Initially, the company targeted bodybuilders wanting to better

understand their specific muscle-related markers and which training programmes they'd likely bulk best with (eg, optimal number of workouts a week and reps vs rest time). Now, FitnessGenes measures more than 150 traits, from your natural sleep cycle to whether you have 'endurance' gene variants associated with being an Olympic-level sprinter (shockingly... I do. Shame I despise running).

How did it go?

My results confirmed I'm a night owl, most likely to be 'alert' after 10am, and therefore should exercise in the afternoon or early evening. As my genetic profile is also linked to benefiting most from moderate-long rest periods between sets, I also focused on timing two-minute pauses between moves. FitnessGenes advised my best shot at getting hench would be working out four times a week and upping the number of reps I do in the gym. I gave its 'hero' plan a go, which incorporates all this info, and was hooked. PBs were smashed and I finally dropped my weight on the assisted pull-up machine, having plateaued for months. I was proud of my hand callouses. There's no denying FitnessGenes helped me get stronger. Equally, it recommended I lift more frequently than ever, so could it have been down to that rather than tapping into my genes? Also, while the team happily responded to queries, FitnessGenes doesn't offer an expert

'Maybe we can know too much about ourselves?'

follow-up chat, so I was left with a lot of questions. One report said I'm at 'high risk' of coronary artery disease and among the advice given was to eat oily fish (I'm vegetarian), up my garlic intake and perform resistance exercises three times a week. Instead, I spent the day panicking about my demise. Maybe we can know too much about ourselves?

FITNESSGENES' KIT AND FOLLOW-UP REPORT COSTS £149 (VIA FITNESSGENES.COM)

What: The blood-type diet

Tell me more: Spawned from Peter D'Adamo's 1996 book *Eat Right 4 Your Type* and resurfaced thanks to TikTok, the diet claims different blood groups respond better or more poorly to certain food groups and exercises, thanks to our varied stomach acid levels and ancestors' diets.

How did it go?

After learning my blood type (A) favours a vegetarian diet, I became curious – I've shunned meat for 20 years. Could there be something in it? Dr D'Adamo's theory is that As have lower levels of stomach acids to digest meat (but O-types should go all in). Instead, I should fill my plate with soy-based products, greens, pumpkin seeds and, err, little else. Restrictive is an understatement: banished were tomatoes, pineapples, peppers, dairy, most breads and the rest of a long list. On the exercise front, it was bye-bye weights and hello yoga, tai chi and Pilates. Hmm. This plan was killer. Really, how could I thrive on something that makes me feel guilty for unknowingly buying a salad that contains chickpeas (also banned)? Plus, the science is largely unsubstantiated. While several studies do link some diseases to specific blood types, I also knew this life wasn't for me. Everything in moderation, as they say, and knowing moderately less about my blood type is my new calling. I bailed after 12 days, but have stuck to having soya milk in my coffee... which I guess is something.

EAT RIGHT 4 YOUR TYPE BY DR D'ADAMO IS AVAILABLE FROM WATERSTONES FOR £10.99

What: (Very) personal training

Tell me more: From playing memory games to testing my blood sugar levels and being strapped into a VO_2 max measuring device on a treadmill, personal training group Hawq (Health And Wellness Quotient) go in-depth when it comes to client assessments. After observing your metrics and discussing your lifestyle habits, it provides you with a score out of 1,000 based on five core pillars: sleep, body, movement, nutrition and mind. Mine was 632, which, I'm told, isn't bad. But it certainly could be better.

How did it go?

After my consultation, when I explained I'd like to boost my core strength and lower my resting heart rate, my trainer, Livvy, who is available to DM at any time on the app, built me a personalised plan. While Hawq has one London studio, it's not nationwide – so a lot of the advice was to be self-implemented. Hawq also set me a calorie allowance (along with a daily protein, carbs and fat target) and there are demo videos and recipes on the app. With my heart health goal in mind, Livvy suggested I increase my steady state cardio (an activity such as rowing or dancing where your heart rate averages 120bpm), which saw me dust off my lockdown trampoline. Overall, given the ability to tweak the plan to fit your lifestyle, I'd rate Hawq as my favourite. As for my resting heart rate? It's dropped by 3bpm since trialling the programme and carrying on some of its tips. We love to see it!

A HAWQ ASSESSMENT COSTS £225

PHOTOGRAPHY: STOCKSY, GETTY

Get Lippy Over Brunch

JOIN THE CONVERSATION ON GYNAECOLOGICAL HEALTH – IT'S TIME TO BREAK THE SILENCE.

NO MORE WHISPERS. NO MORE STIGMA.

Embrace the power of friendship and conversation by joining us for the Get Lippy Over Brunch movement this May. Gather your squad and let's chat openly. Together, we can raise crucial funds, save lives, and put an end to gynaecological cancers.

Don't miss out – visit getlippy.org.uk or scan the QR code to learn more and get involved today!

GET LIPPY for the eve appeal

Lead partners

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UNITED KINGDOM CEW

HARVEY NICHOLS

Get Lippy is a campaign from The Eve Appeal, the only UK charity dedicated to funding research into the prevention and earlier diagnosis of the five gynaecological cancers. Registered charity no. (England & Wales) 1091708

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Your summer horoscope is here
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Skip the hangover with these wines
Page 51

Honeymoons are back, but they’re actually megamoons this time

Big-budget weddings were so pre-pandemic. In this economy, we’re more intentional about cash, and that means spending that 140-person-buffet money on an all-in, weeks-long holiday with your lawfully wedded lover instead. Hot-air balloon rides not optional

WORDS: KRISTY ALPERT

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY

The vibe:

Living the island life

Ser Casasandra on Mexico's Isla Holbox is the ultimate set-up for you and your SO to switch off, flop in the sun and completely unplug. Holbox's self-contained island life means no decision fatigue; everything you want is a short walk or bike ride away. Bookend your day with 8am yoga and a sound healing ceremony at sunset, and in between opt for a deep tissue aromatherapy massage, all at the Ahal wellness centre. Or stumble from your canopy king bed straight on to the white sandy beachfront and sip on spicy margs at the Mojito Beach Club. For water babies, there's a three-island boat tour at sunrise, and those who like to roam can hop on a free bike to explore the lush natural landscape (or the nightlife) on wheels.

The vibe:

Safaris and suntans

Grab your other half and switch from the bush to the beach with an eight-night holiday in South Africa and Seychelles. First, fly into Johannesburg and start with four nights at the Singita Lebombo Lodge in Kruger National Park, where you'll sip sundowners (aka sunset happy-hour cocktails) over the N'wanetsi River after days spent gawking at wild lions and giraffes. Then catch a flight for your next four nights on Mahé island at the Four Seasons Resort Seychelles, which will involve massages, mango mocktails and many, many midnight dips – skinny or otherwise – in your very own private plunge pool.

The vibe:

Private island and jet skis

You and your partner can scope out all of Curaçao's 35-plus beaches during your romantic stay if you travel by jet ski, but it would be much more fun to hit one a day on your month-long stint in paradise, no? A single week on this Dutch Caribbean island isn't enough to explore its pastel-coloured shops or hidden coves and inlets, but we'll excuse a shorter stay as long as enough stroopwafels and champagne bubbles are consumed. Choose your villa at Baoase Luxury Resort based on your favourite private pool type – tropical, plunge or infinity – or just casually opt for your own private island at the resort's exclusive Isla Kiniw.

The vibe:

Robinson Crusoe, but make it luxe

The Alila Kothaifaru Maldives strikes that perfect balance between low-key and luxury. Set on a natural private island in the Raa Atoll, stylish and sleek beach villas and water bungalows sit among endless white beaches, lush jungle and crystal clear waters. But it's more than Alila's eco-friendly approach, minimalist decor and delicious fresh coconuts on tap that'll make you feel like a boujee castaway. The stunning spa features treetop treatment rooms for total at-one-with-nature zen. And there's The Shack – the resort's very own sand cay (basically a mini private island, off the main private island) that you can book for a picnic lunch or sunset BBQ.

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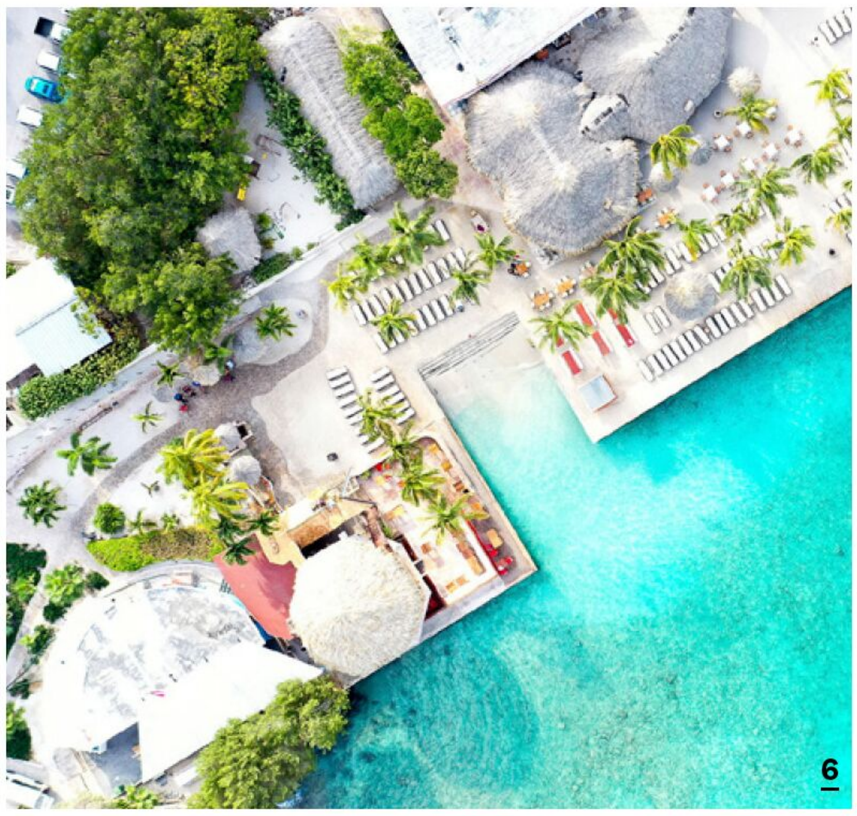
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1. Mojito's Beach Club at Ser Casasandra **2.** The Schlosshotel Kronberg **3.** Singita Lebombo Lodge **4**. Serene sunsets in the Maldives **5.** The Royal Scotsman train **6.** One of Curaçao's many beaches

The vibe:

Sekt and castles

A little German lesson: 'burg' means 'castle' and 'sekt' is code for 'sparkling wine'. And your sekt-filled German fairy tale wouldn't be complete without a stay at the Schlosshotel Kronberg – Empress Victoria Friedrich's former digs – outside Frankfurt for a few glam days before driving south for three nights at 11th-century Burg Hornberg on the vineyard-lined Neckar River. Spend a spa day at Thermen & Badewelt Sinsheim to sauna and swim as you two please (eg, nude and with booze) or day-trip it to explore romantic Heidelberg's vineyards, castle and cafes. There's also the Hotel Burg Trendelburg, where you'll sleep à la Rapunzel (thought to be the story's inspiration). Schloss Lieser is another must-visit for a regal stay along the Moselle River.

The vibe:

Whisky and sleeper cars

Grab your better half and board the Belmond Royal Scotsman train in Edinburgh and check into your private sleeper cabin for a seven-night journey through the Scottish countryside. Hit up the dining car for multi-course meals, head to the spa carriage for a massage synchronised with the sway of the train or cuddle up in the observation car for live music. And there's 2,356 more scenic excuses to pack your passport and go.

Your summer horoscope

WORDS: JAKE REGISTER

Gemini
Right around your birthday, Jupiter enters your sign, where it'll stay for about a year. This is major for you Gemmy, and will go a long way towards countering your (mostly) undeserved 'fake' reputation. You're beginning to evolve into a decidedly more real version of yourself. Proud of you!

Cancer
We see you hiding in that crab shell, and that's more than okay. Late May and early June are all about shutting out the world so you can focus on your inner self. As summer continues, though, it's time to get out there. Mercury, Venus and the Sun in your sign starting around mid-June help make you a superstar.

Leo
Typically, if you can't be in charge, you prefer to fly solo, but that's not the move right now, Leo. You need to practise working with people. Some of them will soon be moving up and, before you know it, you're going to have friends in very high places. Friends who remember how well you treated them.

Virgo
All eyes are on you at work, and if you perform well, the rewards will be unbelievable (if, instead, you do a shitty job, trust that there will be major consequences). Proceed with determination and try not to stress. You'll be garnering other kinds of recognition, too, especially when you show up for the right reasons.

Libra
It's time to renew your passport, even if you don't have any confirmed plans (yet). While new career opportunities are on tap for the start of summer, the stars say you'll be travelling soon, be it a trip to the countryside or a 12-hour flight. Save some space on your cal for lots of playtime once Leo season begins.

Scorpio
Who and what really matter to you, Scorpio? Astrology is calling your attention to this question this season, because unless everything in your life is going perfectly (lol), you'll need to start cutting some stuff out. It's not all daunting, though, summer is also throwing exciting opportunities of all kinds your way.

Sagittarius
You take pride in being independent and spontaneous (as you should), but... wouldn't it be nice to have someone along for the ride? Now's your chance to form important new relationships, whether that means a new bestie or the love of your life. Either – or both – will help you learn how much fun it is to have a ride-or-die.

Capricorn
Cancer season is your own personal cuffing season, making it likely you'll soon meet a new loved one (or at least a new lusted-after one). But first you have to work on banishing those bad habits so you can be your very best self this summer, ready and able to charm the pants off anyone and everyone.

Aquarius
Hello to this ah-mazing astro weather! You're having a damn good time, especially on the love front – dating, hooking up, or really going there with your partner. Cancer season at the end of June brings your focus back to work for a bit (sorry), before all the fun starts up again at the end of July.

Pisces
Everyone else may be out there having the time of their lives, but you're catching up on R&R in May and early June. Then, post-summer solstice, love is in the air, sex is hotter than ever and you're likely to find romance everywhere you look. So enjoy that nap and be ready for a wild end of the season.

Aries
Heads-up, Aries: new connections, job offers and travel opportunities are pouring in, so you need to stay on your toes. Your schedule will remain jam-packed until Gemini season is over at the end of June. Next up is a much-needed recharge during Cancer season, before the non-stop pool party that is Leo season arrives.

Taurus
Jupiter finally leaves your sign on 25 May, and after all your ~personal growth~ over the past year, it's your bank account's turn to thrive. Start stashing some cash in savings (if you can) instead of blowing it all on little treats. You won't need 'em – Mars is in your sign for most of the summer this year, helping you kick ass.

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY

Hi. We party without hangovers now

Because £20 cocktails + next-day group chat anxiety = so last year...

WORDS: HANNAH CHUBB

STILL CAN'T SHAKE THE HEADACHES? Look for bottles with low or zero added sugar.

...And lucky for all of us, the wine industry has evolved accordingly. Its newest creation: a line-up of non-alcoholic vinos that actually – truly, we promise – taste great. (We'll pause while that news sinks in and you quit imagining glorified grape juice in dusty vessels.) This zero-proof stuff is legit sippable: delicious enough for any dinner-and-drinks scenario and also fancy enough for any kind of toast. It's ideal for anyone abstaining from booze for financial-, physical- or mental-health reasons, or really, well, anyone at all, for any reason. May we suggest the bottles below?

A crisp white

(Blurred Vines Sharp, £16.99)

Best for: post-work gossip

This slightly acidic white has a light fizz, which, paired with a zingy taste, makes your mouth tingle. A great replacement for your usual sauvy b.

A fruity rosé

(McGuigan Zero Rosé, £4)

Best for: poolside sips

Thanks to its aromatic and vibrant kick, this refreshing fruit-forward number tastes like a hot summer's day by the beach. Serve it cold as hell.

A dry red

(Eisberg Cabernet Sauvignon, £3.50)

Best for: special nights in

Promise us you'll pair this with steak or chocolate cake (or, honestly, both). It's velvety smooth with notes of berry, plums and cherries.

A bright bubbly

(Freixenet 0.0% Alcohol Free Sparkling, £4.75)

Best for: celebrations, obviously

This beauty pops and fizzes just like the real thing. Its tropical fruits and citrus flavours will be great in your next-morning mimosa.

PHOTOGRAPHY: STOCKSY

READ The cover interview

Your massive crush on Sabrina Carpenter is justified

The singer on touring with Taylor Swift and staying in her own lane

WORDS: MADELEINE FRANK REEVES
PHOTOGRAPHY: BRENDAN WIXTED

Forgive me for starting this story off on such a deeply woo-woo note, but there's really no other way to say it: when Sabrina Carpenter and I part ways after a two-hour breakfast at Sant Ambroeus in the West Village, New York, her taking off into a black car in a big furry leopard-print bucket hat, my first thought is that she operates with the knowing self-awareness of someone who's been here before. It's not enough to call the 25-year-old 'mature' or an 'old soul' – although both of those things are true, platform boots and micro-miniskirts be damned.

It's more that she walks through the world already embodying some of the lessons that take many of us decades or even a lifetime to learn: how to trust her gut, never take herself too seriously (while still working really hard) and the magic of staying present in the moment. Then there's this insight, which she dropped between bites of toast, 'I feel like I have a very, very strong relationship with the universe and not even in an astrology-type or spiritual way. I think I've always just been very good at knowing the things that I want to do and that I can make them happen.' You walk away from a conversation with Sabrina thinking, 'Damn, she's really got this figured out.'

And it's a good thing she does, because with the kind of year she's had – including the fever dream of opening for one-of-her-longtime-idols-turned-friends Taylor Swift on a tour that's become a once-in-a-generation culturally defining moment – it would be all too easy to lose touch with her sense of reality.

Of course, Sabrina does have more than a decade of experience navigating a career in the spotlight, having landed her first role at age 11 on NBC's *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* and then, in almost rapid succession, starring in Disney's *Girl Meets World* and Netflix's *Work It,* putting out five albums with her addictively feminine, extremely layered pop sound and all too relatable relationship-centric lyrics, touring the world and building an Instagram following that's more than 33-million-fans strong. And the thing is, she seems to be having fun with it all. Exhibit A: the way she custom-writes and belts out delightfully raunchy new outros to her hit song *Nonsense* throughout *The Eras Tour* (and during her *Emails I Can't Send Tour,* too), tweaked specifically to whatever city she happens to be performing in[1].

Meanwhile, not unlike the megastar she's been opening for, parts of her personal life play out for public consumption via a self-feeding loop of lyrics and gossip and headlines and then lyrics again, sending fans into detective-mode as they sing along to every verse. The latest round of headlines, in case you've somehow missed them, pertains to a certain internet-breaking rumoured suitor.

Over the course of our candid heart-to-heart, we got into all of it. But first, I had to call her out on something she'd said...

Late last year, in your acceptance speech for the Variety Hitmakers Rising Artist Award, you mentioned how your mum would reference *The Tortoise And The Hare* story when you were a child and how it helped you get comfortable with 'the mindset of a slow rise'. At first I was like, 'Oh, I relate to that.' And then I thought, 'But wait. She's only 24 [at the time]. She got her first acting job at 11. She had this major role at

OPENING SPREAD: Coat, bra and shorts, all Stella McCartney. Boots, Prota Fiori. Necklace and ring, Marlo Laz. Earrings, Ippolita.
OPPOSITE PAGE: Dress, Tory Burch. Earrings, Ippolita. Necklace, Cartier. Heels, Paris Texas

1. The version on her album is 'Woke up this morning thought I'd write a pop hit / How quickly can you take your clothes off? Pop quiz.' A few favourite alternatives: 'I've got a personality but no tits / This song is not about Joshua Bassett / Los Angeles your energy is big dick' and 'When you go down under, do you miss me? / He's so big I felt it in my kidney / Screamed so loud they heard it here in Sydney.' I 10/10 recommend training your TikTok algo to serve these outros to you as often as possible.

'The Eras Tour
feels like Broadway. That's an art. It's hard to teach. It's hard to learn'

15.' It made me think about the ways in which ambitious women move the goalposts for ourselves.
I was really nervous when I gave that speech, to be super frank. That award was such an honour, but it was one of the first speeches I've ever given, in a room of all these people I admire.

I was a kid when I saw that Miley Cyrus was 16 and touring arenas. And so my mind went, 'At 16, you're going to tour arenas.' And then when that didn't happen, I was like, 'Oh'. I think if you really look at how long I've been singing and acting, it's a long time compared with the instant gratification that some people have. I never had the instant thing, which now I feel very lucky about because I have a lot of experience. Even if I'm light-years ahead, I would rather feel that I'm behind and have the ambition to think, 'Oh, I can always work a little bit harder. I can always try something new.' There are things I haven't done yet that I really want to do.

What kinds of things?
Well, I feel so grateful I've been able to tour an album that I really care about for almost two years and that my fans have given it a life longer than I ever could have asked for. I put two and a half years into making it, and it's a shitty feeling when you put so much time into something and people want new music two months later. So I'm trying to really take this experience in before moving on to the next thing... but I've been working on the next thing for a minute. I'm starting to feel like I've outgrown the songs I'm singing, which is always an exciting feeling because that means the next chapter is right around the corner.

Does a next chapter look like more music or a return to acting?
I go to the cinema and I get really jealous of the people in the movies. I'm like, 'Oh, I want to be in a movie.' And then I go to concerts and I get jealous of people on stage. I'm like, 'Oh, I want to be on stage.' I think that's a good sign. The hardest thing for me to do sometimes is to stop and take a moment to recognise how much I grew over the past year. I didn't think 24 was going to be special at all. When I turned 24, I was like, 'What is this year even made for?' Because 21 is always very pronounced and 25 is also very pronounced. But the middle ages, oof. Even with songs, there's 'Nobody likes you when you're 23.' But there's nothing about 24.

So was 24 different than you expected?
You still feel very youthful, you can still wear very short skirts, but you also feel more insightful and have a bit more knowledge and experience. You're better able to know the people that you want to invite into your life, whereas before you're just nice to everyone and want to be everyone's friend.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Top and shorts, Poster Girl. Earrings and necklace, Tiffany & Co. Ring (index), Ippolita. Ring (middle, worn throughout), Maison Raksha. Bag, Louis Vuitton

'Having this job can feel very lonely and weird because you can't turn it off'

I think that's what's happened to me over the past year and a half. Instead of being like, 'Do people like me?' it's 'Oh, do I actually like you?' Not in a mean way, but in a sense of, do I want this energy around me all the time? Is this someone who adds to my life?

What are the things that you look for to determine whether someone's adding to your life?
People who stimulate me and don't just agree with everything I say. And people who are funny. When I meet people that feel very genuine and pure, I hope to keep them in my life. Because that's the only way that I'm going to stay close to the ground in any capacity. But also, part of learning is keeping the wrong people in your life for a period of time. I've learned that lesson the hard way a couple of times, for sure.

Tell me about the day-to-day of life on the road with Taylor Swift for *The Eras Tour.*
What's been so fun about this tour is getting to perform in places I haven't before. And I'm quite jetlagged because we're all over the world, so sleep is super important. The hardest thing is turning your brain off and getting everything to quiet down. But I'm grateful for my inability to turn my brain off at times because that's when I come up with ideas. I feel creative. I feel excited. After a show, I think a lot about what I want to do differently next time and what I want to do with my own show in two years' time.

I did two legs of the *Emails I Can't Send Tour,* and that was amazing, but it was a much more rigorous schedule. I feel so genuinely lucky on *The Eras Tour* because I get to perform a set that I'm super comfortable with, and then I get to watch one of the greatest performers every night. My favourite thing to do has always been to watch people who look so comfortable in their bodies onstage, such as Madonna, Britney and Prince. Sometimes when you don't have a mirror in front of you and you can't actually see how you look, a lot of the learning comes from watching a video back and thinking, 'Oh, I thought I was giving more than I was actually giving.' And it's been a very tall order being on a stage that big because – and this is not even to sound like a pick-me, like when girls are like, 'I'm so small, I can't reach the top shelf' – I'm literally five feet tall. So sometimes when I'm on that stage, it feels so huge that I just have to be larger than life in some capacity.

It almost feels like a Broadway show because everything is so synchronised, but at the same time feels so in the moment. That's an art. It's really hard to teach or learn. And I feel so lucky that I get to watch Taylor perform. It makes me want to tour the world again, which is a good feeling.

It sounds like you're energised and excited by what you're doing – but I can imagine that if you weren't, you'd risk burning out.
Yeah. It would be rough. No, I'm still very much in love with it. I think that's the whole goal, to keep falling in love with what you do all the time in new ways. With this industry, if you're focused on the wrong things, it can be easy not to feel that way. If you're focused on the things that excite you and the things that bring you that inspiration, that joy, it's a more lighthearted experience.

What would be the 'wrong' things to focus on?
Anything that makes you question your own innate feelings, ideas and emotions. You read all of these interviews with artists in the past where the work that they were the most criticised for or the work that they were the most scared of was the thing that felt the most honest to them. And I always try to keep that in mind – to not take what other people say too heavily.

Considering that you're in a more constant feedback cycle than previous generations, you have to be particularly intentional about taking a step back and knowing what noise to drown out.
Correct. You have to be discerning and protect your energy, as they say. Because everyone has the ability to say whatever they want. And you're like, 'Do you have a degree in anything?' People comment all the time, sounding like vocal instructors talking about technique, and then you go to their profile, and they're literally working at GameStop [an American electronics company]. And no offence to anyone who works at GameStop because I love GameStop, but I just mean it in the sense that people will be doing something so different with their lives and still have opinions on things that they're not an expert on.

Knowing what to actually take to heart is always going to be difficult, but especially, I think, at this age. It's nice to have friends in the industry you feel like you can trust. You need to have people who've been through similar things and can be a normal friend and just happen to have this job as well.

What are some of the ways that you lean on those friends?
It ranges from things such as, 'Can you come to the gynaecologist with me?' And also, 'Can you listen to this song and tell me if it should go on my album?' I feel very lucky that I have friends I can ask those things of because having this job can feel very lonely and weird because you can't turn it off. Genuinely, I've been in situations where I'll go to some sort of doctor's appointment and they'll ask me questions about [my life] while they're checking me out, and I don't know how to respond.

One of my best friends has taught me the art of people-watching. It's very easy to be so focused and zoomed-in on your own stuff that you miss the funny things that someone is doing next to you or down the street. When I look at more than just my bubble, it ends up inspiring a lot of lyrics and song ideas.

I feel like the most interesting people have a real curiosity about the human condition and want to learn from others and put that into their art. It's about trying to make sense of the threads that pull us all together and what shared experiences we have.
On your time off, when you go out and socialise, do you feel like you're able to connect with people in New York[2]? Because in the beginning, I had a hard time. But now, I've made so many friends here, such as at different restaurants or people who are working at shops. I'm so interested in people in New York because I feel like they always have some wild stories that are really inspiring to me. I'm curious if you feel that way here, too

'I've always connected more with people who are really in touch with their emotions'

Absolutely. There are so many fascinating, ambitious people.
A lot of hungry innovators. Meeting other people who also are like, 'Oh, I really want to make this, and I really want to do this,' and who are actually taking the steps to do it always makes me want to do more. And the only way the world keeps moving is if we keep making stuff, if we keep changing through new ideas and conversations. That sounds so dramatic. But every time you meet someone random, it's never random. It's for a reason. You're supposed to learn something. I've had strangers in New York tell me things that I will put on my gravestone.

Are you having these conversations with people who know who you are, who are fans?
Most of these conversations are with an older man or woman who has no idea who I am or what I do. And for whatever reason, we're in the same place at the same time and can get deep on things. They'll be like, 'I was alive in the Second World War, and I can tell all you about my affair.' It's just so interesting. I definitely have regrets about not asking my grandparents enough questions. So now I try to have those conversations a lot more and see what I can learn from other people.

So I understand how you approach friendships and meeting new people. Can we talk about how you approach dating[3]? As you put your hands over your face to hide!
A lot of it, for me, has been fate. I know that's super broad, but I don't actively look for it. The relationships that I actually want to put my energy into have to be so interesting or invigorating because they take me away from the other things I love. So yeah, it's fun and it's messy. I think I'm still just at this place where I'm really enjoying the newness of all of it.

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2. Sabrina moved into an apartment in downtown Manhattan in 2021 and splits her time between New York and Los Angeles.
3. Sabrina and I had breakfast in January, when rumours of her and *Saltburn* actor Barry Keoghan were fuzzy at best. Now, based on candid pics and Instagram comments, their romance seems to have blossomed further, but her team didn't respond to a request for comment on the matter... so do with that what you will.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Coat and boots, Mugler. Necklace and rings, Cartier

Dress, Fannie Schiavoni.
Bra, Fleur du Mal.
Ring, Cartier

Do you use apps?
No. I have one app, and I usually never open it. But there would be times when I would want to see that other people exist. I know that sounds weird. Because when you’re on tour for a very long time, you’re just like, oh my god, there’s no one around.

Just tens of thousands of screaming girls.
It’s either screaming girls or it’s people you work with. So when I was younger, I was like, ‘Maybe I should get an app to see if there are human beings.’ But I’ve never, ever, ever, ever gone on a date from an app. It’s always just been by fate and by chance, people I meet or people that I connect with through friends.

I’d imagine your experience is very different from the average 25-year-old.
I don’t know. What’s an average 25-year-old? What was your dating experience when you were 25?

I’m a terrible example. My husband and I started dating in college. I was 23 when we got engaged, which is wild to think about now in my thirties.
Oh my god, you’re one of those. My best friend just got married and she’s my age.

Do you like the guy[4] [she married]?
Oh, I love him. He’s amazing. It just made me feel like I was really behind or something. And then I realised, no, no, no, she’s just ahead.

Everyone’s on their own timeline. I have friends who have gone through divorces in their twenties.
I love how we’ve normalised that. Because that makes me feel a lot less scared when it comes to dating. When I was younger, I always thought, why would I date this person if I didn’t see myself marrying them? I just wouldn’t even put energy into it.

But now I have a mentality that there are relationships that are meant to be in your life, even if it's only for a couple of weeks.

And you learn something from everyone. Of course, in your case, you can unwittingly become the subject of a media frenzy based on even the briefest of relationships.
I'm not really aware of that until I have someone random that I didn't tell, 'Oh, I'm dating this person,' tell me, 'Oh, you're dating this person.' It's a weird thing and it's so funny because it might be someone that I talked to three times and I haven't even decided if I like them. But it's like, if you're two feet away from them, then you're together.

And then your gynaecologist is going to ask, 'So, is this why you need birth control?'
Exactly. They're going to ask you about it when you open your legs. That's the weirdest part. I wish more people knew that there's nuance, as opposed to taking everything on the internet as fact. They know that in their own lives they might be texting someone but not in a relationship with them. But for some reason, it's very black and white when it comes to the internet and the way that people on the internet are portrayed. I have to laugh at it though, because sometimes I read some funny shit, but it almost feels like I'm reading about someone else.

Do you have a type in general?
Contrary to popular opinion, I don't think I have a type. But the internet loves to just put pictures next to each other of men who have the same hair colour. I'm super attracted to a lot of the things I look for in friends because I want to be with someone who's going to be one of my best friends. So a lot of it is energy and humour and being genuine. I will say I've always connected more with people who are really in touch with their emotions. I mean, none of those relationships have worked out so far. Sometimes I think I'd be better off with a mime.

You're like, 'I'll just fill in the blanks.' I'd imagine, too, that people in a creative industry can be particularly in touch with their emotions.
Yeah. The funny thing is that the relationships that people know I've had are obviously with people in this line of work, but they don't know about the ones that aren't. I just don't know if the apps are ever going to be a thing that makes sense for me because I love meeting people in person, and I love getting to know someone through talking. I love talking so much. You can tell. You're like, 'I know.'

The perfect interviewee. It's great that you're not holding yourself to some societal standard or clock when it comes to where you should be, especially when you're at such an exciting time in your life with so many wonderful things going on.
I mean, we can't all get engaged at 23-years-old. Holy shit. That's amazing, though. I think about that sometimes. Obviously, it would be so lovely to know that I have my person. I always think about the Cher interview when she's like, 'I don't need a rich man, mum. I am a rich man.' I don't know if it's necessarily as simple as that, but whether I'm alone or with someone, I always say to myself, 'I'm supposed to be here right now.' So I just try to think about it like that. I feel like life will work really hard to give you clarity and understanding in one section of your life over another. So sometimes when I'm working, everything feels super aligned and makes sense, and that's when maybe my personal life doesn't feel as clear, and then vice versa.

Okay, so across your personal life and your professional accomplishments – of which there are many – what are some of the things you love most about yourself?
I love this question. I think the fact that I really, really do love to find the humour and joy in things, even if they feel really dark and heavy. That's saved me a lot of the time. Ooh, answering this is tricky. Because you're like, am I going to say my hair? I've always loved the way I care about my friends. When I love people, I just care about them so much and want to make them feel loved and seen. And then the third thing, I would say I like my ass. I will do squats till the day I die.

Okay, being that this is *Cosmo* – and that you graced the world with the horniest Christmas music of all time[5] – I have to ask: have you ever used a *Cosmo* sex tip? And do you have any sex tips for our readers?
No one's ever asked me this. I feel so honoured[6]. Honestly, this sounds weird to say, but when I was in my early teens, I read the *Cosmo* sex tips. Jesus. Sex tips, I feel like... [At this moment, two waiters start making their way to our booth, and she pauses.] Let me just bring them over to the table as well so they know.

Right, if you could just stand on the bench here...
Yeah, exactly. With a megaphone. This is so funny. I feel like it's so different for everyone. I mean, at the end of the day, my whole thing right now is, whatever you do, don't get pregnant. That's the way I'm living my life. So that's my sex tip. Be smart. Use protection.

It's funny, too, writing the outros, because I feel like I've learned a lot more about sexuality through writing those than people think. I think people believe that I'm just obnoxiously horny, when in reality, writing them comes from the ability to not be fearful of your sexuality as opposed to just not being able to put it down.

But, in a real way, my advice is: do whatever feels most comfortable to you. You can be curious and ask questions, but a lot of it is just going to be you learning yourself. So do whatever makes you feel the most comfortable and safe. Boring answer.

But so important. Thank you for humouring me with that.
Of course. I feel like now I'm going to get in the car and be like, 'I had way better sex tips.' ◆

STYLIST: CASSIE ANDERSON. HAIR: DANIELLE PRIANO AT KALPANA. MAKEUP: CAROLINA GONZALEZ AT A-FRAME AGENCY. MANICURE: NAOMI YASUDA AT FORWARD ARTISTS. SET DESIGN: STOCKTON HALL AT ATELIER MANAGEMENT. SHOT ON LOCATION AT VIRGIN HOTELS NEW YORK CITY

4. A question that I asked without realising she was more likely than not talking about actress Joey King, who got married last September.
5. *Fruitcake,* featuring lyrics you'll just have to hear for yourself if you haven't already.
6. Dear reader, I can confirm: Sabrina genuinely lit up in surprise and excitement at this question.

RELIGION DOES NOT BELONG IN MY UTERUS

ise thee;
fearfully
nderfully
ade:

Believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved

ACTS 16:31

WE LOVE YOU AND WE CAN

EVERYONE LOVES SOMEONE WHO'S HAD AN

FORCED BIRTHERS ARE IDIOTS

Exodus 20:13

Thou shalt not kill

On the abortion frontlines

Once home to some of the most draconian laws on reproductive rights, Northern Ireland has become an unlikely template for broadening abortion access. But, as Anna Cafolla finds out, the anti-choice front is reconsidering its tactics, in moves that could be perilous for abortion rights worldwide...

It's a breezy Tuesday morning in January, and I'm standing on the grassy knoll of a roundabout in Coleraine, Northern Ireland. In the windy vortex, as cars and lorries roar by, a line of small white crucifixes shudder.

An elderly man in a flat cap skulks past me, avoiding eye contact (and my attempts at 'hello'). He picks up a few of the crucifixes at random and deposits them all into a wheelbarrow-like contraption, already piled up with placards emblazoned with bible verses and outlines of foetuses.

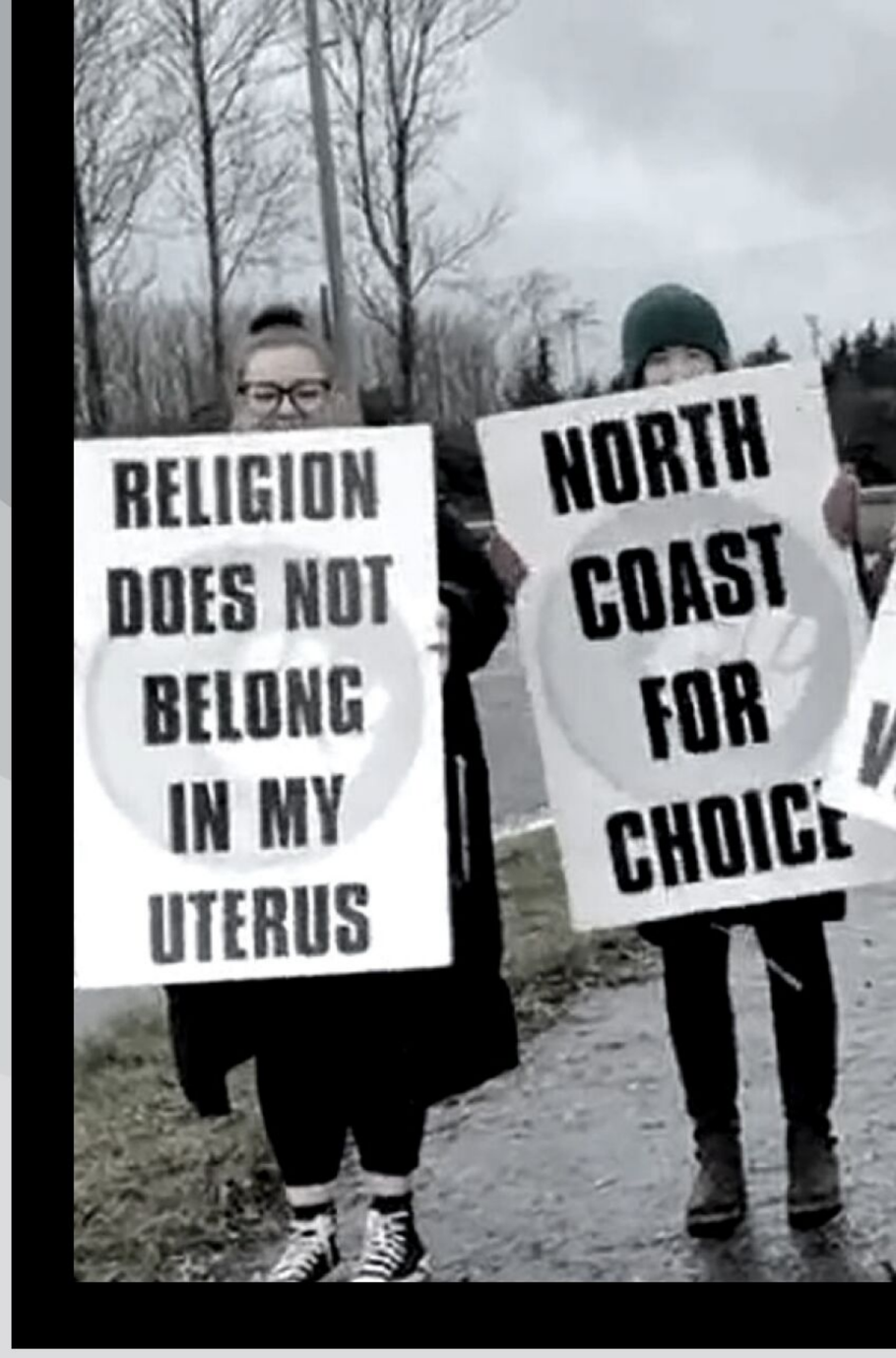
'He made that himself for transporting all his bits,' says Lauren McAuley, who is standing beside me with a pram, her son inside. 'End of your shift, isn't it, Dave*?'

No response. He extracts more crucifixes from the ground.

'He acts like he doesn't know me,' says Lauren, 'but you do know me, right, Dave?'

Silence. Dave yanks a placard from the ground. It reads: 'ABORTED BABIES – REMEMBER THEM' in angry, spindly Biro. A car honks one long hoot as it speeds past, and he waves the sign – stoic, whether in solidarity or defiance.

We stand at the fervent, physical frontline of reproductive rights in Northern Ireland. A country that, for decades, had some of the most restrictive reproductive rights laws in the western world, is now at the unlikely forefront of liberal abortion legislation. 'Safe Access Zones' (SAZs) are upheld by law to allow people to freely and safely access abortion without threat, harassment or protest. But is it working? And what can the rest of the UK and Ireland learn from it? I came to see its reality.



A change in law

The roundabout where the SAZ limit stops is pocked with tiny indentations from the crosses, and the spectre of other anti-abortion protest ephemera looms, too – cable ties rattle against the street lamps just over the zone boundaries, where bigger, graphic banners were once erected.

For decades, abortions were only allowed in NI if a woman's life was at risk, or there was a serious risk to her mental or physical health. In 2019, when draconian laws were still in place, more than 1,000 people travelled to Great Britain for abortion access. Generations have protested for better – 21 women dragged suitcases through the streets of Belfast in protest in 2019 to symbolise the number of pregnant people forced to leave Northern Ireland every week to access reproductive healthcare. Pro-choice activists' homes and workplaces were raided for illegal abortion pills, and clinic escorts were assaulted and abused when limited abortion access did come to NI.

Decriminalisation was introduced by Westminster later in 2019, and in December 2022, the NI secretary of state instructed the commissioning of abortion services. the Department of Health explains to *Cosmopolitan* that, 'It has allocated funding and has been overseeing the implementation of services. Abortion services are now available in all five hospital trusts in Northern Ireland, which enable the majority of demand to be met locally. Recruitment and training remain ongoing to ensure that these services are

Causeway Hospital is now one of eight abortion providers in Northern Ireland to have a Safe Access Zone

fully resourced and sustainable going forward.'

However, in practice – I've been told – full access has been patchy and inconsistent: there's a lack of medical training, and funding gulfs; services have collapsed in certain districts where staff and facilities haven't been available; politicians tasked with its roll-out have dragged their feet. Concerns have also continued to be raised in Westminster and beyond over whether full commissioning of abortion services in Northern Ireland has taken place.

The implementation of Safe Access Zones in September 2023 felt like another step towards progress – and Causeway Hospital is now one of eight abortion providers to have one. Before this, the protesters would have been found right at the hospital entrance, where signs were furiously waved in people's faces as they entered – whether accessing abortion services or the sexual health clinic, paediatric clinic and services for people experiencing miscarriage. The possibilities for inflicting distress were boundless. These new zones protect the rights of people accessing abortion or associated reproductive health services, and they prohibit protest and certain behaviours – such as obstruction, recording and harassment – within the SAZ. Police have powers to intervene and fines for breaches top £500.

While other places around the world – including British Columbia, Canada, and Victoria, Australia – have robust SAZs, Northern Ireland has become a curious litmus test. After having some of the world's strictest reproductive rights frameworks, it became the first UK region to legislate for SAZs. In October 2022, MPs voted overwhelmingly in favour of SAZs for England and Wales, but despite the act becoming law in May 2023, at the time of writing it has yet to officially commence, with campaigners fearing that when it's rolled out it will be watered down. In Scotland, a bill for SAZs is currently under scrutiny at committee stage – two years after it was first proposed.

Another bill, currently in progress, will see Westminster MPs get a free vote on decriminalising abortion in England and Wales, which would end the prosecution of women who terminate pregnancies after 24 weeks. As Scotland has its own legal system, abortion is still criminalised under common law. The law stipulates that two signatures from doctors are necessary to proceed with an abortion, which can delay the process – particularly poignant in Scotland as, like in NI, women can live in more remote areas. As debates take place in parliament, online and on the streets, it makes examining Northern Ireland's reaction to SAZs – viewed overarchingly as a victory here – more salient.

Protests continue

Our Causeway excursion is Lauren's tiny son's first activist event. As we walk the perimeter of the SAZ, Lauren, a member of pro-choice group North Coast for Choice, points out the anti-abortion protesters she knows well, and who she believes are newer recruits. We meet Raymond, who travels 50 miles each week to picket Causeway. He once ran unsuccessfully for UKIP. Lauren tell us one woman, who stands on the other end of the SAZ with her teenage son, is believed to be the wife of a minister in the area. Some ministers, such as Ross Collins, regularly preach anti-abortion rhetoric in sermons and the town centre. Some churches have held fundraisers for evangelical and US-linked anti-abortion groups. This woman tells me she's there to share the 'good news' of her religion and save 'the defenceless unborn'. Another proudly tells me she pickets Pride events, too.

Lauren shares dozens of photos from vigils, before and after the SAZ was implemented at Causeway. The signs show bloodied foetuses, bible quotes and misinformation that links abortion to breast cancer and infertility. There are more white crucifixes and miniature coffins laid at the hospital entrance, which also leads to the maternity ward, children's unit and sexual health clinic. Lauren is currently collecting testimonies from the local community to make a case for extending the SAZ. Currently, SAZs are a minimum of 100m from each entrance and exit, but this can be extended up to 250m if the health trust applies for it. Lauren and a number of others want all SAZs to be set at 250m. By the end of 2023, police were investigating up to 50 potential breaches of the laws. Causeway has the most. Last November, a banner comparing the Causeway clinic to a Nazi concentration camp popped up. Colette Ansell-Wood, a pro-choice campaigner, tells me that she saw the sign on social media and drove to Causeway to see it for herself.

'I'm an armed forces veteran. I have a child with Polish ancestry. I was deeply offended.' Colette says when she tried to untie the sign, she was pinned to the ground by two men, while a woman with them called the police and claimed Colette had assaulted them. '[The protesters] sat on me. One was growling at me. It was vicious,' she says.

Colette was not arrested but she was told she could be interviewed under caution at a later date. 'It's distressing to have this hanging over me,' she says. Formal warnings were later issued to protesters. 'I believe in the right to protest but not to intimidate and assault. Especially when it's imposed on people who are already vulnerable or distressed,' she says.

Police shared a statement with *Cosmopolitan* detailing the 7 November incident, 'Police received a report of an offensive sign being displayed near the Causeway Hospital. An investigation was conducted and a file was subsequently sent to the Public Prosecution Service for direction.

'A further report of common assault was received. Despite numerous attempts to contact the alleged injured party, this report has since been filed pending further evidence.' Colette told me she had finally heard from a 'very apologetic' police officer who had attended that day, who

told her that if no evidence was submitted by the anti-choice group before 7 May, the case would lapse.

In October, a man and woman were arrested for refusing to leave the SAZ – the only two arrests made of the 50 police reports. Lauren later tells me her group has pulled back from physical presence outside Causeway Hospital so as not to exacerbate clashes with anti-choice protesters. When I check in again with Lauren before *Cosmopolitan* goes to print, she tells me that the anti-choice protesters were back again with their signs comparing Causeway to Auschwitz. Officers came to the scene and departed without investigation or arrest. Perceived police leniency towards protesters is also an ongoing issue among pro-choice activists, who are concerned about institutionalised abortion stigma.

The Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI) responded, 'On 19 March 2024, police received a report of a similar offensive sign being displayed near the Causeway Hospital. Officers attended and no offences were detected.' The statement also clarified that each incident took place outside of the SAZ. Information on what constitutes an offence – if not a sign referencing the Holocaust in relation to accessing abortion – has not been supplied.

Superintendent Amanda Ford said, 'We will continue to respond to any breaches on an individual basis and engage with anyone potentially committing an offence under the legislation in a bid to ensure understanding of the legislation and balance the rights of all persons involved.

'As a police service, we will seek to work with the Department of Health, local health trusts and all relevant parties to respond as appropriate to any breaches of the legislation that are reported to us.'

Clare Bailey is a former Green Party Member of Legislative Assembly who brought the Private Members Bill eight years ago that ushered in SAZs in 2023. Clare sees the SAZs as a success. 'Even before I was elected, I would have been very open that I thought we'd not see these kinds of changes in my lifetime,' she says. She recalls the intimidation and violence at locations such as Daisy Hill, Newry and College Street, Belfast. 'I look back at why I wanted to introduce this legislation and the absolute horror that women were being forced through day to day. I remember women running into traffic to get away from protesters trying to talk to them. Women leaving the clinics in tears. [The protesters] would record people and pretend they were from the BBC or undercover police officers. I'm not sure that's still the case.'

Clare was an escort for Marie Stopes, the first private abortion clinic in Northern Ireland, which opened in 2012 and closed in 2017 when restrictions were relaxed. 'I was spat on, physically and verbally assaulted. There's a night and day difference. There was a deliberate, targeted campaign of harassment against women on our streets.' Claire emphasises that the bill was never intended to curtail freedom of expression, but to ensure safety. 'That's successful.'

Tactics shift

With increasing restrictions on traditionally organised and very public means of obstructing abortion, a more insidious, covert strategy brews. At Causeway, two appendages of the movement are reflected – one, the vocal, aggressive anti-choice front; the other, an invisible anti-choice network that wishes to keep hidden.

When I ask the pockets of protesters at the SAZ about their group, they say they don't know each other, yet I'm confident they're talking on walkie-talkies. When I ask one woman about their WhatsApp group and Facebook pages, she bristles. 'I do this alone,' she says. 'This is my own calling.' Multiple sources also tell me anti-choice campaigners have private meetings with high-ranking political figures in Causeway and across the districts. Leaders and politicians from the Democratic Unionist Party and SDLP have attended public, anti-choice demonstrations in Derry and Belfast. In a country shrouded by shame and conflict, mysterious networks are all the more disturbing.

Just one of the horrendous signs facing Causeway clinic visitors

Google 'Need an abortion Derry' and one of the first results is Advocate Women's Centre. The website tells you that 'if you're pregnant and considering making an appointment for an abortion, it's important for you to do two things: take a pregnancy test and have an ultrasound scan.'

Below that, there's a button to schedule an appointment for both 'steps' today, at no cost. Throughout, it suggests impartial advice: 'Advocate Women's Centre provides information on your options but does not perform abortions. We provide non-diagnostic limited ultrasounds.'

Advocate Women's Centre has been known to use scans and waiting periods to obstruct access to care, and to delay the process until a person passes the legal limit. A recent RTE documentary captured nurses and support staff sharing religious teachings and misinformation on the abortion process. Derry pro-choice organisers confirmed to me that they have spoken with people who have had abortion care delayed and denied due to Advocate Women's Centre's obfuscation. The centre runs eight Google search ads, which have been viewed thousands of times and include that they would provide information on the abortion pill.

When I ask about such unregulated clinics, the Department of Health rep directs me to its communications campaign from 2022, 'approved referral services', such as the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, and NI Direct, which highlights approved abortion information, advice providers and referral services. 'These are updated on an ongoing basis and explain that independent clinics do not offer abortions in NI.' Advocate Women's Centre does not respond to my requests for comment, only to say I have received 'disinformation'.

These types of clinic are not new. Stanton Healthcare saw potential in Northern Ireland – the American anti-abortion healthcare provider opened its first clinic outside of the US in Belfast in 2015, three years after the legitimate Marie Stopes centre. It now has plans to open a second clinic in Derry. Its prominence on Google, with a site heavy on keyword searches,

shows that obstructing abortion is now search engine optimised. When *Cosmopolitan* reached out to Stanton Healthcare for comment, it did not get back to us.

'There have been positives and negatives,' Bethany Moore of Alliance for Choice Derry says of the SAZs. Yes, the protest groups are significantly smaller but, she adds, 'I think they've put their focus elsewhere – to their centres.' Their signs in Derry at Altnagelvin Hospital, Bethany says, have become bigger and brighter billboards.

Signage and leaflets can include numbers for religious groups and crisis pregnancy centres that are easily mistaken for non-partisan support. In Belfast, anti-choice organisers have been known to actively approach women on their way into the clinic to direct them towards Stanton Healthcare, housed on the same street as the now-shuttered Marie Stopes clinic. Danielle Roberts of Alliance For Choice in Belfast shares a story of an asylum seeker in emergency accommodation who was intercepted by Stanton. 'They strung her along,' she says. 'She finally got in touch with us and we helped her – but we've then had issues with translators refusing to translate under the guise of conscientious objection.'

Some of Northern Ireland's abortion clinics, such as Advocate Women's Centre Derry and Stanton Healthcare are unregulated, private enterprises. They seemingly take advantage of the knowledge gap around abortion access to spread disinformation and discourage people from accessing abortions. 'They're cunning,' Bethany says.

'It's not always a difficult decision for someone to have an abortion. Everyone's circumstances are different. A lot of our work now is helping people unlearn stigma that still exists here. The "othering" of abortion, when abortion should be very simply viewed as healthcare, adds to that.'

The social landscape is in flux, too – only last year were regulations brought forward to make post-primary school sex education (that includes abortion and pregnancy prevention) compulsory. And while now mandatory, the teaching of relationships and sexuality education is developed by each individual school. These lessons are often still rooted in faith-based teaching – anti-choice groups have been present at schools in the past. New regulations for more expansive education have stalled.

'We always say you shouldn't have to be an activist to know where to go and access an abortion,' Bethany says. 'For a lot of people, that isn't the case.' When writing this feature, I found it hard to find clear instructions for accessing abortion online in NI. It's concerning how less knowledgeable people could get caught – I can see how easy it would be to end up in a bogus clinic, or manipulated into choices not your own.

There are calls for awareness and training campaigns for the public, as well as doctors and abortion providers. 'There's a culture of fear and misconception,' Danielle says. A report by Amnesty International included testimonials from women who had been made to feel 'disgusting' by medical professionals for seeking an abortion. Susan* said her doctor 'consistently ignored' her wishes. Instead, they pushed her to have a scan and 'healthy pregnancy and healthy baby'. She pursued an abortion elsewhere.

In a statement, the Department of Health confirmed it would publish an annual report, 'setting out whether, in the opinion of the Department, each Safe Access Zone has been effective in protecting the safety and dignity of protected persons. In the meantime, the Department meets regularly with trust representatives and the PSNI, and has received assurances that the SAZs have been effective and appropriate to date across all trust locations.'

Back on Belfast's streets, I search 'abortion clinic near me' and I'm served Stanton Healthcare (it has a four-star rating from 240 Google reviews). I walk to the heaving market area. Cornmarket is a petri dish for protest, preaching and buskers. Anti-choice group Precious Life is running its weekly stall, soliciting signatures for a petition calling for new legislation to 'protect every unborn baby'. Belfast Council has just ended a period of public consultation on proposals for bylaws that would ban noise nuisance in the area. It would stave off the extreme religious preachers' anti-choice rallying, but would also impact freedom of expression and the right to protest without permit. I walk to the Rose Clinic's SAZ perimeter. A place where once 40 protesters could gather is now quiet. Only the distant hum of Bible verse carried via a loudspeaker travels from the market.

Access to abortion is still incredibly fragile and fraught. Even with SAZs, services can collapse if one healthcare provider goes on maternity leave or holiday. While access to early medical abortion is available up to 12 weeks in all trusts, surgical abortion up to 20 weeks is only available in one. But, 10 years ago, this story would be very different, and much more bleak. There's hope now, buoyed by the pro-choice movement's continued organising, from anti-stigma workshops to training abortion doulas for self-managed abortions.

Amnesty International found that 65% believe having an abortion shouldn't be a crime. Anti-abortion groups remain a presence, but their ability to obstruct abortion access has been significantly reduced. Progress is being made and so their tactics are diverging. Pro-choice activists are tracking them and, as abortion rights fracture elsewhere, the rest of the world should, too. ◆

'I thought we'd not see these kinds of changes in my lifetime'

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY. COURTESY NORTH COAST FOR CHOICE. *NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED

The little Black beauty book

From brand founders to facialists, we tapped up our favourite beauty experts to share their top picks. No gatekeeping here

WORDS: KEEKS REID

When I was younger, before the days of TikTok and saving inspo to your Pinterest board, the internet and traditional media were bleak places for Black girl beauty recommendations. Like, *really* non-existent. I yearned to one day work for a glossy magazine, but I never saw models who looked like me in their shoots or found products that stretched to my rich skin tone on their pages. Coming into my beauty era when I was in my late teens and early twenties, we had to rely on localised beauty recommendations from friends and family, sharing the hits and the misses – and there were many, many misses. It was my community who saw me through my 'What's the best weave hair?' questions, skin texture issues and 'WTF to do about hyperpigmentation?' woes.

Then I began working at a magazine that was specifically aimed at Black women and answered all the questions that catered to our beauty needs. It was heaven. At the same time, the natural hair movement on YouTube was on the rise, born out of the need to create a space to help demystify caring for our coils. These were such amazing resources, but they were only created due to the lack of inclusion elsewhere in the mainstream. We needed to make our own spaces because we were typically left out in the cold. I'm prouder than ever to see how far the beauty world has come with inclusion and diversity, but I also recognise that we still have a way to go.

Yes, although the Black beauty community is brimming with content to feed all our makeup, skincare and haircare needs, when it comes to traditional media, it's only ever dotted here and there for us to digest when we discover it. That's why I'm so proud to be a *Cosmo* girl and be part of a magazine that has given me the space to write for Black women, recognising where it can be more inclusive, from my first-ever article for the website ('Seven of the best foundations for darker skin tones') to this all-encompassing little Black book of all things beauty, with advice and recommendations from myself and industry insiders who don't gatekeep.

Yours truly,

Keeks Reid, *Cosmopolitan* UK's contributing beauty director

My little speed dials (or DMs) for hair

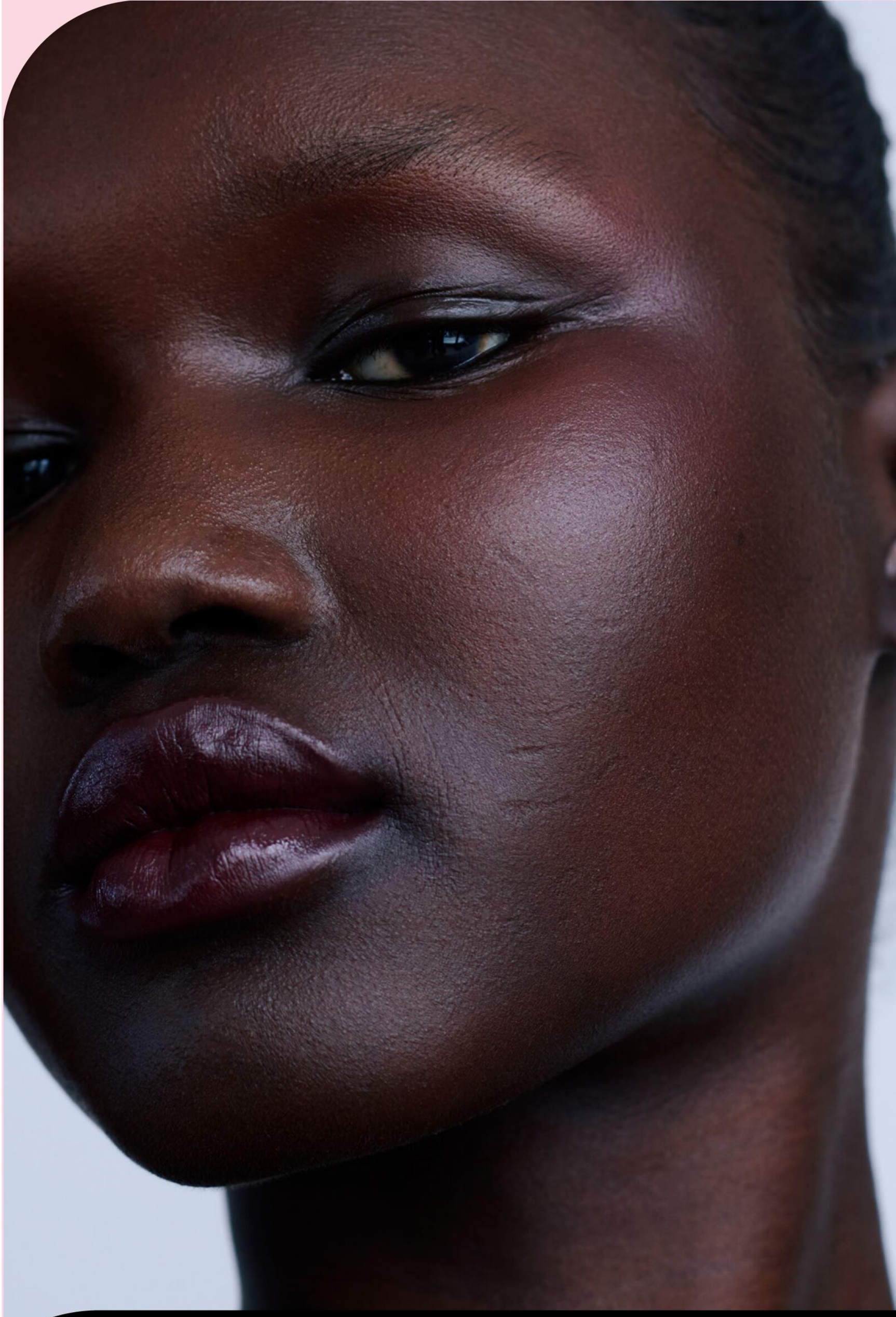
You know I love you because now they won't have space to squeeze me in, SMH

HAIR: LORRAINE DUBLIN, MY HAIR BAR, FITZROVIA, LONDON

I have known Lorraine for nearly 10 years and she has been my go-to hairdresser for at least five. While I often visit other salons as part of my work as a beauty journalist, it's been integral for my hair's health to have one stylist who knows my coils inside out (and who forces me to have a trim). Having a trusting relationship with one hairdresser is really special as I know I'm in safe hands. She has an impressive roster of celeb clients including Serena Williams and Vick Hope, but her salon, which she co-owns, is still homey. If you've ever wondered how my hair still looks healthy despite the amount of heat I use, it's down to her.

HAIR: LLOYD COURT AT SEANHANNA, WIMBLEDON, LONDON

Colouring Afro hair without completely ruining it is a fine science. Our already drier and more fragile texture has to have most of the melanin stripped out of it to have a good base for the desired colour to stick to, meaning a strong pre-lightener is needed and the margin for error is teeny tiny. I've only ever dyed my hair with Lloyd and am always blown away by the results. When it comes to lightening my hair, he goes 'low and slow' and the salon insists on a strand test (as well as the usual patch test) to ensure that your hair and skin can handle the chemicals used.



A note on skin clinics...

We talk about hair salons' lack of coily hair expertise, but what about skin clinics not being informed on Black skin? Our skin is a live organ – it can react to products and treatments, and some trained professionals just don't have experience in treating it. Proficiency in understanding skin beyond number three on the Fitzpatrick scale unfortunately isn't universal, so before booking in with a clinic for things such as laser or specific dermatological concerns, I'd check if they're on the Black Skin Director's clinic directory. Clinics on here have been vetted and certified as having the highest level of knowledge and experience in treating skin of colour, so you know you're in safe hands.

Beauty bag essentials

Our favourite beauty experts on their go-to products and treatments

KEYSHA DAVIS, freelance beauty editor
CAROL'S DAUGHTER GODDESS STRENGTH FORTIFYING SHAMPOO, £12.99
'This shampoo does wonders for my hair. It's super thick and creamy and leaves my 4C natural coils feeling soft, glossy and defined. It's blended with castor oil, black cumin seed and ginger, which are renowned for their hair-strengthening and scalp-soothing properties.'

SHEI MAMONA, beauty writer
AVA ESTELL MAGIX CREAM, £29.99
'Raise your hand if you've been personally victimised by hyperpigmentation. I, for one, have spent my whole life trying to battle through it, and when I got my hands on this cream I started to see major improvements. The formula is soft like whipped cream and you won't want it to end.'

DIJA AYODELE, skincare expert, author and founder of Black Skin Directory
FENTY BUTTA DROP WHIPPED OIL BODY CREAM, £32
'I love this luxurious butter texture that deeply hydrates. Your skin feels moisturised for ages.'

CHELSEÉ LEWIS, beauty expert
KÉRASTASE NUTRITIVE MILK, £33.85
'I absolutely love this product. It really protects my hair from heat, it's non-greasy and gives such a fantastic blow-dry. It's a game-changer.'

EWOMA UKELEGHE, medical and cosmetic doctor and founder of Skndoctor
WESTMAN ATELIER LIT UP HIGHLIGHT STICK, £44
'This highlighter is one of the best I've ever tried. Giving the most gorgeous lit-from-within natural glow, it's perfect for deep skin tones.'

JACQUELINE KUSAMOTU, beauty specialist and co-founder of Candour Beauty
CERAVE SA SMOOTHING CLEANSER, £13.99
'I use this cleanser about two to three times a week. I highly recommend it to anyone who wants to give their body a nice exfoliation for soft, smooth skin.'

ANITA ASANTE, global strategic brand partnerships consultant and founder of Scalp Good
GARNIER ULTIMATE BLENDS BODY RESTORING LOTION, £5.99
'My skin gets so dry and I have tried everything. This is the one thing I swear by – it makes me feel smooth like a baby's bottom.'

CHARLOTTE MENSAH, award-winning hairdresser
INGRID FELICIANO AT BAGUA THERAPIES, TREATMENTS FROM £50
'I've been seeing Ingrid for years for a combination of deep-tissue massage, acupuncture and cupping. She goes above and beyond to ensure that you're getting the best treatment possible, and I always leave feeling better emotionally and physically.'

ELENA CHABO, beauty writer, *Cosmopolitan UK*
SLEEK MAKEUP LIP VOLVE GLOSS TRANSFORMING LIP TOPPER IN CLEAR, £5.99
'Clear gloss? For Black beauty? Ground-breaking. It's applied by a literal plastic spatula. Just think about the slathering potential. Also, it can be wiped clean if applied over colour, so you don't tint the whole tube. Plus, stickiness is minimal.'

KELLE SALLE, media officer, beauty and lifestyle writer
MEDIK8 HYDR8 B5 LIQUID REHYDRATION SERUM, £45
'I can't do without hyaluronic acid in my skincare routine. It's one of my favourite ingredients because of its hydrating and moisture-boosting benefits. I love how quickly this serum sinks into my skin and instantly leaves it looking plump.'

YASMIN ARTISTRY, content creator
HYDRAFACIAL TREATMENT, AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE
'I recommend hydrafacials. They are the best type of facial for dryness and I always come back with radiant-looking skin.'

SHERRILLE RILEY, founder of Nails & Brows Mayfair
KELSEY MOTHER OF MASKS RAPID RADIANCE MASK, £55
'I use this mask in the mornings to brighten and wake up my skin for a beautiful, long-lasting glow.'

JULIA DIOGO, nail artist and founder of Painted by Jools
K18 LEAVE-IN MOLECULAR REPAIR HAIR MASK, £70
'This leaves my hair silky-smooth after blow-drying. I'm in my haircare era, so adding products that help reverse damage is great for keeping my strands in good condition.'

LORETTA DE FEO, founder of Dizziak
REOME ACTIVE RECOVERY BROTH, £75
'This is a really beautiful serum that has improved my skin texture and also prevented breakouts. Plus, it feels like a soothing ritual whenever I apply it.'

VANESE MADDIX, freelance beauty journalist and podcast host
LANEIGE CREAM SKIN CERAPEPTIDE TONER & MOISTURISER, £29.50
'If you're looking for instant hydration, then this hybrid toner and moisturiser might be just what you need. When I say the hydration it gives

is off the charts, I mean it. It contains a nourishing blend of ceramides and peptides like nothing you've ever tried before.'

RONKE ADEYEMI, founder of Brown Beauty Talk
DIZZIAK DEEP CONDITIONER, £22
'After I double cleanse my hair, this product brings it back to life. It replenishes all the essential oils and detangles. It contains aloe vera, argan oil, castor oil, coconut oil and shea butter. I started using it during lockdown and have never looked back.'

MIKAI MCDERMOTT, writer and hairstylist
GOT2B GLUED ULTRA STYLING HAIR GEL, £5.50
'I use this for the sleekest buns ever!'

ALICIA LARTEY, qualified aesthetician and beauty writer
TYPOLOGY L38 RESURFACING LIP PEEL 2% MANDELIC ACID + POMEGRANATE ENZYME, £23.90
'We're so used to lip care being a simple old scrub or balm, but this clever treatment borrows the exfoliating ingredients from facial skincare and brings them to the lips.'

JAMELIA DONALDSON, founder and CEO of TreasureTress
MARIA NILA COILS & CURLS CO-WASH, £25.50
'I'm biased I'm sure, but a recent TreasureTress box gave me the privilege of testing this product, and wow. It smells insane, is vegan and feels so luxe.'

ATA-OWAJI VICTOR, freelance beauty and lifestyle writer
RUKA HOLD ME DOWN EDGE GEL, £16
'This brand is known for its textured extensions, but the product I find myself recommending the most is this gel. I love it because it gives a foolproof way to turn anyone into an edge-swooping pro.'

MORGAN FARGO, freelance beauty editor
NATURIUM THE GLOW GETTER MULTI-OIL HYDRATING BODY WASH, £18
'This is my ride-or-die. It effectively washes away the grime of the day while also imbuing skin with non-greasy hydration, meaning when you get out of the bath or shower, you're already primed for whichever cream you'd like to slather on.'

AMERLEY OLLENNU, beauty and lifestyle editor
TREPADORA COCONUT ALMOND DETANGLING CONDITIONER, £31
'Trying to find a conditioner that can make detangling my 3C curls an enjoyable experience has been no easy feat. But if I close my eyes, I can pretend I'm on a sun-filled island thanks to the tropical scent of this rich and creamy conditioner. It leaves my curls soft, shiny and frizz-free.'

DANI NICHOLLS, content creator and podcaster
CHARLOTTE TILBURY LIP CHEAT PILLOW TALK INTENSE LIP LINER, £21
'A beautiful rich, dark brown lip liner, perfect with gloss for every day. It gives the illusion of being put together.'

TOBI OREDEIN, founder and CEO of Black Ballad
NYLAH'S NATURALS FLOURISH SCALP SERUM, £15
'When I was postpartum, I lost quite a bit of hair and this scalp serum has helped restore it to its glory days.'

SARAH-JANE CRAWFORD, presenter and founder of Clean Curls
LIHA OJU OMI MUD CLEANSER, £34
'I recommend Liha's skincare and treatment range. The products are full of richness, integrity and natural ingredients. The ethos supports healthy ageing and it makes me feel they are really looking after us womxn.'

JOY ADENUGA, celebrity makeup artist
ARMANI LUMINOUS SILK CONCEALER, £38
'One of my top concealers. I love how it applies light but packs a punch in terms of coverage. If you struggle with concealers that crease or settle into fine lines, you'll love this.'

PAULINE BRISCOE, celebrity makeup artist
LAURA MERCIER TRANSLUCENT LOOSE SETTING POWDER, £38.50
'The one thing I can't live without in my makeup bag is Laura Mercier's setting powder. It sets dark skin without looking ashy or orange.'

LESLEY BUCKLE, content creator (@freshlengths)
KOBA GOLD DRIP NOURISHING BODY AND HAIR OIL, £55
'You can use this product literally from head to toe and it feels so lightweight and non-greasy. The blend of oils including safou and jojoba make my skin feel so smooth.'

AVA WELSING-KITCHER, freelance beauty editor and brand consultant
D.THOMAS CLINIC SIGNATURE LASER FACIAL, FROM £205
'This is the only facial treatment that has truly knocked others out of the park for me. After six months, my skin was bouncier than it was in my teens – plus, the results lasted for almost a year.'

RHEA CARTWRIGHT, freelance strategic beauty consultant
WILD SOURCE GOLDEN HOUR OIL, £38
'Golden Hour is my all-year essential, it's packed with nourishing oils to keep any ashiness at bay. PSA: apply your body oils and creams on damp skin to trap in extra hydration.'

ADEOLA GBOYEGA, makeup artist and content creator
LANCÔME TEINT IDOLE ULTRA WEAR FOUNDATION, £39.50
'It's normally so hard to find your perfect shade of foundation, but this one comes in 45 shades. It's so versatile, you can add moisturiser to sheer down the coverage or build it up.'

PHOTOGRAPHY: IRINA SHESTAKOVA/GALLERYSTOCK, BRI JOHNSON/GALLERYSTOCK AND STOCKSY, GETTY

Treatments that work

A little gift from me to you: clinics that leave me glowing

SKIN: THÉRAPIE CLINIC

Not all laser machines are created equal, and older machines can be harmful to Black skin as the laser can't distinguish between the colour of your skin and hair. We're all too familiar with those nightmare laser story time videos on TikTok... yikes. Thérapie uses Cynosure's Elite iQ machine that works on skin up to five on the Fitzpatrick scale, which is as advanced as laser technology is at the moment, and I've been impressed with the results. Even better, there are so many clinic locations across the country.

BODY: ADA OOI

Ada has an abundance of strings to her bow including treating skin holistically. I'm a huge believer in traditional Chinese medicine and Ada uses methods such as cupping, massage and acupuncture to aid with issues from inflammation and fluid retention to fatigue. In a world that often diminishes Black women's pain, time with Ada feels like therapy for my body and soul. ◆

Oh, and if you thought we were done here, we're just scratching the surface. Head to our Black Beauty Hub, cosmopolitan.com/uk/black-beauty for even more tips, expert advice and our fave beauty spots across the UK.

MANI OR MELANOMA?

CHECK YOUR NAILS.
SPOT THE SIGNS.
SAVE A LIFE.

BEAUTY — SPOTTERS•

melanoma UK

Nail the art of beauty spotting

Melanoma UK is urging us to be aware of the unexpected signs of skin cancer

When you check your nails for flecks or ridges, it's because you're after shiny, healthy talons, right? Well, there's another reason to inspect your nails regularly, and that's for signs of acral melanoma, a type of skin cancer.

'Acral melanomas typically look like darker areas, spots or marks on the skin that can appear on the hands, nails and feet of people affected by the condition,' explains Dr Nishali Patel, GP at NHS England. 'They are usually painless and do not go away by themselves over time.'

This cancer's less-obvious signs make it hard to detect, which is why Melanoma UK has launched its Beauty Spotters campaign. By raising awareness of acral melanoma, it's hoped people will spot it sooner. 'Early detection is vital, as this is the most important factor in successful treatment,' says Dr Patel.

While this type of cancer is rare, affecting just 1-3% of people with melanoma, it's most common in people with black or brown skin*,' says Dr Patel.

Dr Sharon Belmo, a consultant dermatologist based in London agrees: 'Medical conditions can present differently in darker skin, so raising awareness of acral melanoma means people can become familiar with the signs to look out for.'

So, next time you're having a mani-pedi session and you notice anything unusual, such as discolouration, don't brush it off. Catch issues early on by snapping a photo and visiting your GP. And if you work as a beauty professional, keep an eye on your clients' hands and feet.

Remember, check your nails, spot the signs and potentially save a life. We can all be Beauty Spotters.

*MELANOMA UK AND CANCER RESEARCH UK

Acral melanoma: what to look out for

A new streak in a nail that is not caused by an accident or bruise.

A nail streak that has damaged the fingernail.

A changing spot in or connected to a mole on the foot or hand.

An irregular-shaped growth on the foot or hand, which is changing, growing or has an unusual colour.

An elevated, thickened patch on the sole of the foot or palm of the hand.

Don't stress – not all nail streaks are melanoma. In fact, acral melanoma is very rare, but like all types of skin cancer, checking for changes can be life-saving. If you notice any of these signs on your hands, feet or nails, see your GP straight away.

Find out more at melanomauk.org.uk

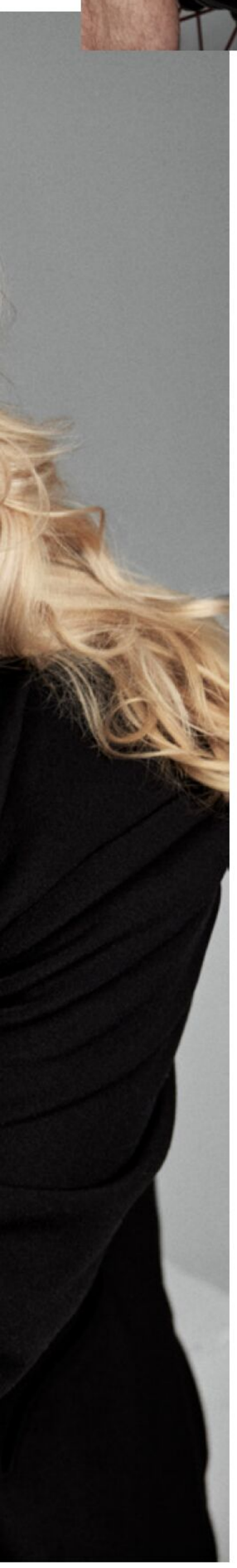
MY BODY, MY RULES

Huge strides have been made in conversations around body image in recent years. But what happens when you break free from the mainstream beauty standards and gender norms we're told to embrace? Here, eight people discuss how they're creating their own definitions of beauty, identity and self-expression...

WORDS: CATRIONA INNES, LOIS SHEARING

PHOTOGRAPHY: VIC LENTAIGNE

READ My body, my rules



I WANT TO BE PERCEIVED AS KIND, I WANT TO FEEL LIKE A SAFE SPACE.

On set for this photo shoot, there was one rule. A rule that – in the media landscape – is not very common. It was quite simply: come dressed as who you are. There was no rail of clothes, no directive to force people into outfits or personas that didn't reflect who they were. There were hair and makeup artists available for those who wanted them. Some used them, others didn't. The result? A space where joy shone through and the diversity and beauty of queer bodies spoke for itself.

Unfortunately, this isn't always the case. While we might be having more open conversations about body image, not everyone is given equal space to explore what confidence means to them, beyond the narrow confines of normative gender and sexuality. What if you don't want the kind of body you see on TV? What if you feel most confident and sexy when you're embracing a masculine, rather than feminine, aesthetic? What if your idea of transition doesn't mean aspiring to 'pass' as cisgender? And even if you're a cisgendered straight woman, what doors are being closed on your path to exploring who you really are and what makes you feel truly yourself?

Mainstream culture repeatedly tries to force people's individuality, their differences, into a binary. Government debates are treating individual's bodies as a political playground. And, as a result, those who don't conform are too frequently othered and attacked. Attacks that stop us all from being able to truly feel at home in our own bodies. So, we wanted to open up that discussion through eight stories. Stories that we hope will make some of you feel seen, feel less alone. Stories we hope make *all* of you feel more empowered to explore self-expression and fight the neat little boxes that some corners of society want to put you, and others, into.

‘My body is my vessel, it gets me through life’

Bel Priestley (she/her), is an actress. She is best known for her role in *Heartstopper*, and her presence on social media (you can find her on Instagram @belpriestley), where she discusses her transition.

‘I’d love to go to a beach, in a bikini, and just be myself. But I can’t. I’d worry everyone was judging me. My insecurities – many of which have been placed in my head by others – stop me from being able to enjoy myself.

‘My family and close friends are supportive, and remind me how beautiful I am, but it can be hard to believe them. I’ve been bullied from the age of five, I came out as gay at 11 and a few years after that I came out as trans. That’s when the bullying really intensified, particularly as I was documenting my experiences of transitioning online. When you have our prime minister saying transphobic things, and passing laws about what I can and can’t do with my body, it opens my world and my life up for debate. People seem to get away with saying transphobic slurs and that results in me questioning myself, and who I am. From the bullying, I have ended up with a lot of insecurities. I didn’t feel this way when I was younger, but dealing with ridiculously high beauty standards and navigating them alongside being trans, has changed how I view myself.

‘When I first moved to London, at 18, I was euphoric. I was going to queer clubs and kissing guys for the first time, I felt free. I grew up in a small town, where there’s almost zero representation of trans people, so being able to surround myself with my chosen family was so special.

‘This is what people forget, that, like all young women, I’m navigating social media, relationships and learning who I am. On top of that, I am facing the brunt of being in the public eye. I’m trying to take less notice of cruel comments. I’ve learned the hard way that if you don’t practise self-love you end up putting yourself in situations you don’t want to be in, or with people who don’t deserve you. I do really like my legs, I inherited my mum’s legs and she once won Best Legs in Britain! I’ve also begun to recognise that my insecurities are things other people love in me, like my jaw and side profile.

‘I hated my body throughout my teens, so when I turned 18, I decided to get tattoos to feel prettier. I have a couple of butterflies, to represent my transition and my angel number is inked on my wrist – it reminds me I’m always in the right place at the right time. Then, there’s the number 18, as I didn’t think that I’d live to be 18. It reminds me I can get through anything.’

Bella ♡

‘I really enjoy existing in a fat body’

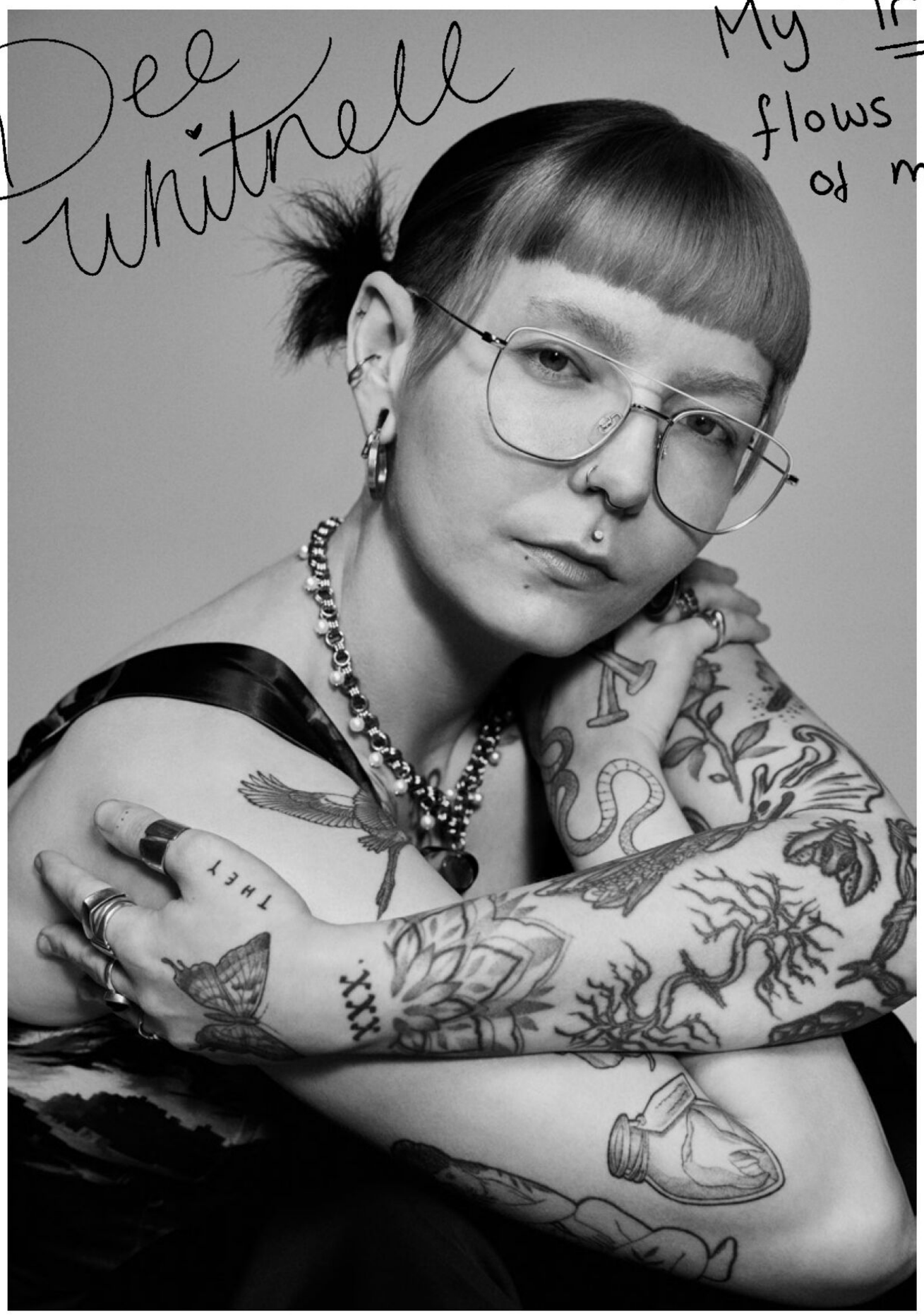
Maz Hedgehog is a poet, writer and performer. They have released several chapbooks including *The Body In Its Seasons* and *Tell Me Who We Were Before Life Made Us*.

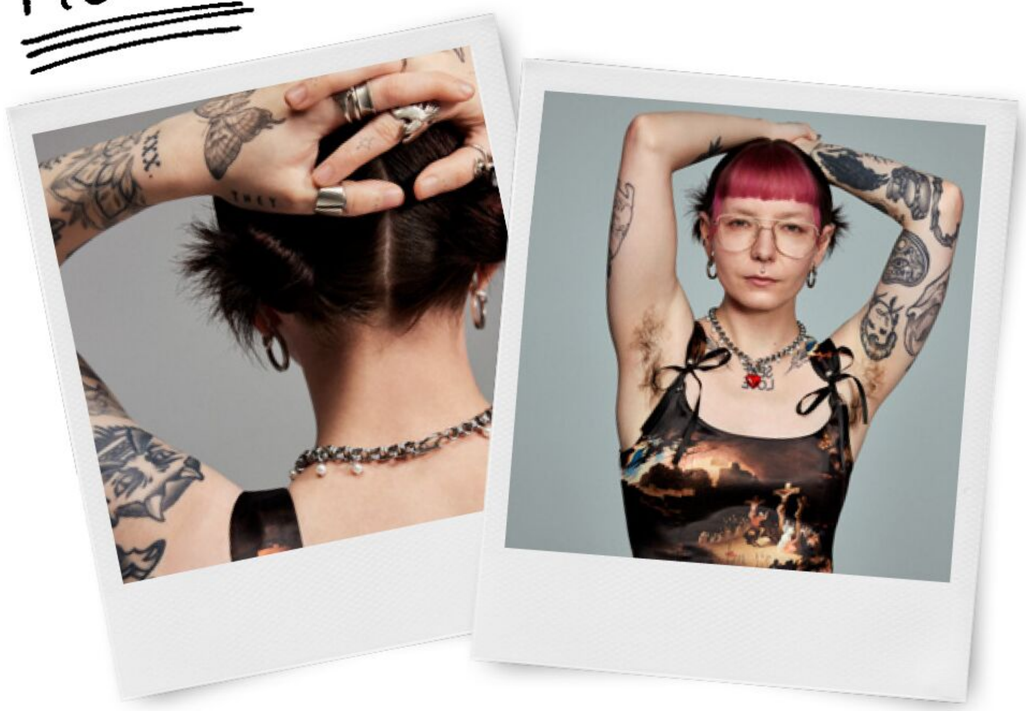
‘The saying that Black people have to work twice as hard for half as much doesn’t just apply to professional fields. I am keenly aware that part of the reason I dress and present the way I do is because when I am well dressed, when I have makeup on, when I’m put together, I am treated better. And not “treated better” as in special treatment, but “treated better” as in receiving basic respect in public. Even so, much of our environment is not built to fit fat bodies.

‘But, despite that, being fat is kind of awesome. I really enjoy existing in a fat body. I enjoy the way that my body moves and the awareness I have of my body because of it. Because I’m less likely to have people be immediately interested in me because of the way I look, I can be reasonably certain that people like me for who I am.

‘My identity is a complicated one. Gender-wise, I’m a nonbinary, a-gender, femme. Sexuality wise, I’m a bisexual lesbian. The lesbian part has only come about recently, whereas I have been part of bi communities for the past 11 years. I am queer because my flesh calls to queerness, and part of that is taking pleasure in what my body wants and needs. I love to eat. I love to cook. So cooking and eating in ways that take time to savour whatever it is that I’m enjoying, really grounds me in my own body. Food is a way for me to find pleasure in my body and feel connected to my body in defiance of fatphobia and anti-Blackness, and of a culture that distrusts pleasure and believes that in order to be a good person you have to sacrifice. But part of what makes me a better member of my communities is that I am able to find joy in myself and try to bring joy to other people.

‘I like the word “fat” because it is a very simple descriptor of my body and, importantly, it connects me to the fat liberation movement. I use the word dyke for similar reasons, because this thing that you fear, this thing that society says you should run from: I am that. I am a fat, Black dyke. And if that’s the worst thing you can say about me, then I am winning.’


Dee Whitnell
My Transness literally flows through every part of my body
Being Nonbinary feels like coming home to yourself.



‘Getting tattooed has meant turning my body into a work of art’

Dee Whitnell is a trans, nonbinary activist. They are the founder of the campaign Trans Kids Deserve to Grow Up.

‘One day, an outfit, my body or my hair will make me feel so good. The next, that same look can make me feel so uncomfortable. Similarly, there are moments when I love making myself feel good, and I love being intimate with another individual, and looking at my body. But then a few months later it’ll be the opposite and I’ll have to cover myself with a blanket when I’m masturbating so I don’t see myself. As somebody who has both gender dysphoria and body dysmorphia, there’s this tug between experiencing pleasure but also feeling dysphoric about it.

‘Using the trans label is something I’ve only recently been exploring. For a long time, I felt like an outsider. I didn’t fit in with the girls or the boys. I actually stumbled across trans identities through a *Hollyoaks* storyline, where one of the main characters came out as a trans boy. It was the first time I realised that you didn’t have to align yourself with your gender at birth. But because that was the only representation I had, I thought I was a trans boy for a while. It wasn’t until lockdown that I came across the term “nonbinary” and it was like I’d come home.

‘While trans and nonbinary people experience gender dysphoria, I think a lot of other people can also understand that feeling of looking at yourself and thinking “I don’t feel comfortable” because of what society has pushed on us. I think everyone, regardless of gender identity, should explore and experiment with their gender expression. It can bring so much joy.

‘Having a trans boyfriend has been another element of exploring my body, and pleasure, on a new level. Through that I’ve really come to love my body again. Being intimate with someone who is queer and trans allows you to challenge those stereotypes that people put on you. I can just enjoy sex without worrying about how my body looks . We were each the first person we showed our chests to. We counted down from three and then showed each other. It was such a freeing moment and made the intimacy so much more intense.

‘Tattoos are also a way of reclaiming my body. It’s a way of turning your body into a work of art. I have my pronouns tattooed on my hands. Even though I might change my pronouns in the future, this was a moment when I came out to my family and to the world and I reclaimed myself. I wanted that always on my body. That’s a part of my story that I never want to forget.’

READ My body, my rules

‘Sleeping with women helped me accept my body’

Catty is a musician, and her latest EP is out this summer.

‘My queerness seeps into everything I do. From what I wear to how I perform. It’s just who I am, and I see allowing that as a kindness to my younger self. I came out in my early twenties, and I don’t think I realised how much [not being out] affected me. I used to cry all the time and I was deeply uncomfortable in my skin.

‘At 20, I came out as bisexual but, almost as soon as I started seeing women, I realised I am a lesbian. I’d held on to a lot of internalised homophobia for so long, and I had to work through that. I used to always try to be super-feminine – which is still a part of how I do my hair and makeup – but how I dress is masculine: I’m most comfortable in a suit and bra.

‘Being a musician has also impacted my body image. This industry demands that you look a certain way, and so many of my friends have issues with body image and food because of it. Now I’m trying to tell myself: I am a musician, I look like me and that’s good enough. Sleeping with women has also helped me accept my body, as I have never looked at another woman and thought, “Ugh, your arms,” yet I used to look at myself in the mirror and think, “Ugh, your arms.” It’s so important to me to be kind to those around others, but I don’t offer myself the same treatment. I’m working on that. I just know that I am so lucky that my body is here at the same time, on this earth, with my friends and family. That it puts me on stage, to sing and perform. That’s such a blessing.’

Catty x

MY FAVOURITE THING ABOUT MY BODY IS THAT IT GETS ME WHERE I NEED TO BE. IT PUTS ME ON STAGE.

‘My reflection matches who I’ve always been’

Verity Smith is a youth engagement manager for Mermaids, and plays for Leeds Rhinos. He lives in Leeds.

‘If anyone asks me who I am, I always say “I am a rugby player.” I am also a gay trans man, but when I am on the pitch, I don’t think about my gender, my sexuality, I just think about the ball.

‘I started playing when I was 11, but playing women’s rugby when I knew I wasn’t a woman was hard. I wanted to come out, but there were bans on elite trans rugby players, so if I did, I wouldn’t be able to play. I couldn’t risk that. After losing my parents, my sport was my one constant. For many years, I lived life as a lesbian. But, slowly, and with the support of my teammates, I was able to evolve into who I really was. At 26, I said to my grandma, “What if I identified as a man?” She said my parents had always known, and they just wanted me to find my expression by myself. When I was young, I wanted to be outside with the boys, my top off, so, as an adult, when I had my top surgery, it felt like freedom. I thought I’d be this really good-looking man... but I went bald and got this dad-bod! I laugh, but now when I look in the mirror my reflection fits who I have always been.

‘In 2018, I was injured due to a rugby tackle and became a wheelchair user. I play wheelchair rugby now, and it’s been a huge adjustment as, at first, I really missed the running game. But I still get to play the sport I love, and I’ve been able to inspire younger people to do the same. I get a lot of messages asking “I’d love to play, but can I? I’m trans.” Sport connects you to your body, and community, and I don’t want anyone to miss out on that. I’ve created an app called Tribe Identity, which lists inclusive sports teams and facilities – there are so many barriers to trans people in sport, like feeling comfortable in changing rooms, that need to be broken down. Unfortunately, it feels like hatred is growing, so it’s vital that trans people find places they can feel safe to play the sport they love.

‘I used to think that, if I was my authentic self, I would have to give up rugby and that I’d never find love. But I get to play every single week, and I live with my boyfriend and two dogs. I carry so many scars, but I can look at them now and see that they were all part of my journey.’

"Performing as a Drag King fits me like a glove; without it I don't make sense."

'I feel empowered when I'm in drag'

Adam All is co-founder and co-host of dedicated drag king cabaret show BOIBOX. They identify as nonbinary/ gender fluid. In drag their pronouns are he/him, out of the drag they're they/them.

'Pirates, knights, Peter Pan... even Bambi was a boy, and, from three years old, I began to dress up as all sorts of male characters. I've never been able to escape queerness. I was endlessly boxed in as a tomboy, or fully misgendered. I grew up under Section 28, which affected my entire childhood and education. The impact it has had on how I view myself and my body, has been huge. Under the section 28 law, no authority could present or promote homosexual relationships as healthy or normal, and so language was limited, representation was nil; even historic figures were masked. So, as a kid, who I was felt like an illness, and certainly that was the response from my peers. I came out as gay at 14 and by 17 it was clear to me that my identity did not match the female gender I had been assigned at birth. At 18 I began exploring the idea of trans. Was I a man? Then, at 20 and in university, a friend introduced me to the idea of gender neutrality. It was like a light came on. I've continued to allow myself a fluid and changeable understanding of gender as it is and feels to me. I would say there isn't really a box that works for me, and the rules seem arbitrary.

'Performing as a drag king (@adamall_drag), however, fits me like a glove. Expressing and deconstructing these walls of societal gender expectation isn't just a life passion, but, put simply, without it I don't make sense. I feel empowered and confident in drag, feeling masculine with my broad shoulders and muscular legs – being considered "manly" is not demeaning for me at all. It's where I hold all my strength and it's how I pay my bills. It's frustrating when people see me in drag and say "Yass Queen", as it completely defeats the point of my work. But what's even more annoying is how often strangers feel the need to stare at my genitals, when I'm out of drag. Presenting as queer all the time seems to give people a licence to think about how, and with whom, you have sex, when that information is private.

'Despite all of this, I am very grateful for my body. I enjoy being strong, dexterous, flexible and capable, and, although I take great efforts to maintain those things, I will also be grateful to live long enough to see those fade away. It's worth enjoying whatever your body can do, and equally, hanging whatever bits of clothing off it that you fancy. It genuinely shouldn't matter that much – that's why I do drag; to point that out.'

‘My Intersex-Inclusive Pride flag gave me, and millions of others, permission to feel included’

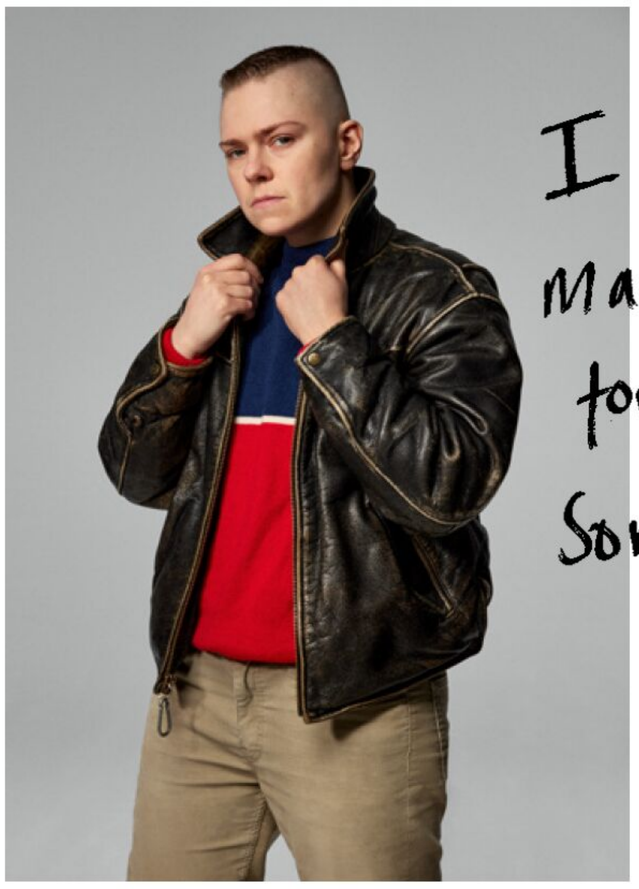
Valentino Vecchietti is the founder of the Intersex Equality Rights campaign and the creator of the Intersex-Inclusive Pride flag, which is now used globally.

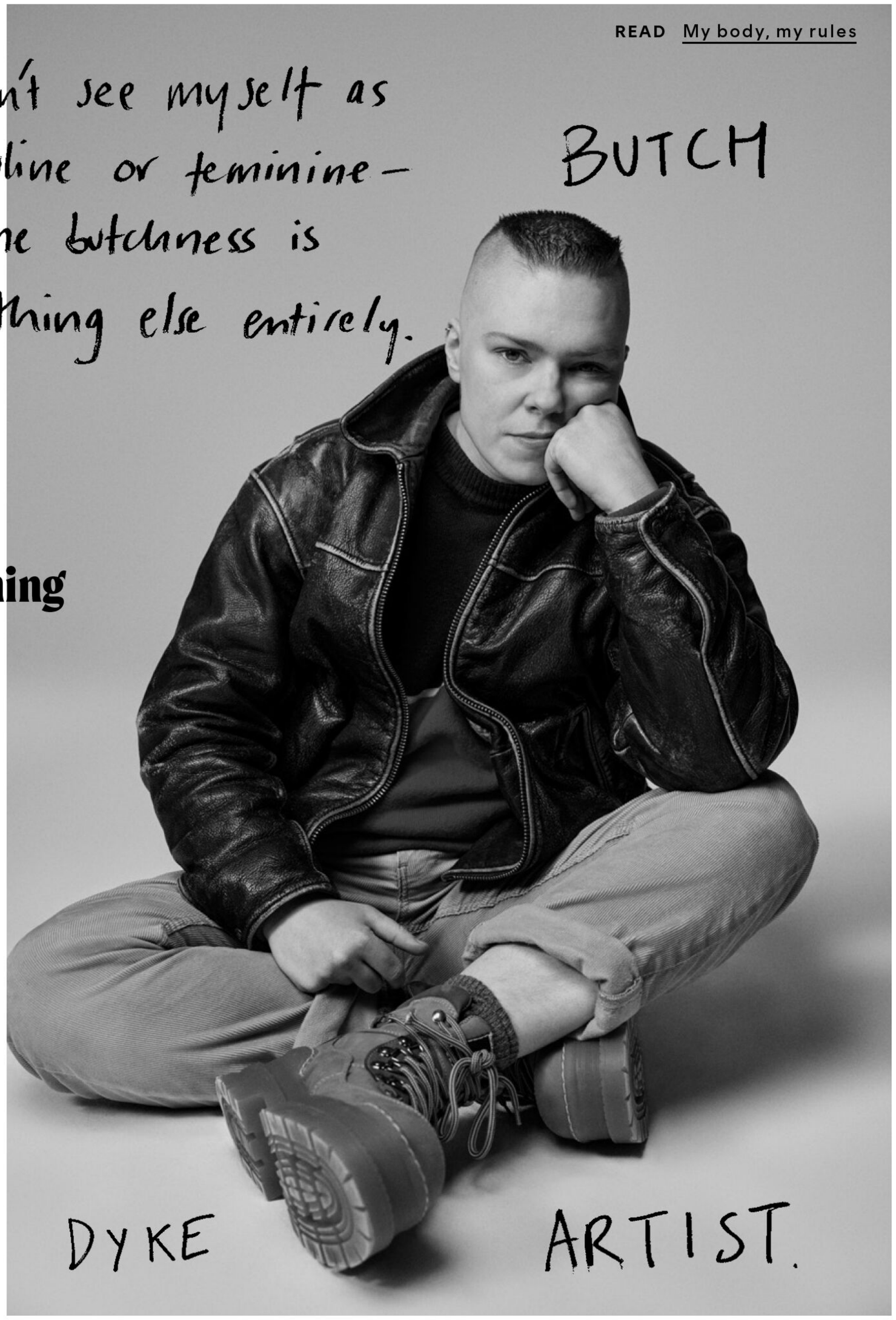
‘As a person with intersex variety, I’ve rarely felt welcomed. Like many in the community, I have experienced body shaming in medical settings, particularly during childhood and puberty. Intersex babies continue to be subjected to non-essential surgeries, and hormonal interventions. These have nothing to do with our health, but medical professionals have said that they are needed as our parents won’t bond with us and that we will be rejected.

‘I’m a mixed heritage, second generation immigrant. My dad is very religious, and I grew up with the notion that lesbians will “burn in hell”. When I realised I was a lesbian, I thought, “I can never tell Dad.” I never did. It was so isolating.

‘Throughout my life, I have had to live with layers of secrecy and shame, partly because of racism in the schooling system and exclusion from the queer community. I didn’t want this for myself or other intersex people, so I designed a flag that included the intersex symbol – a purple circle on a yellow background.

‘When my flag went viral, it was the most uplifted I have ever felt. It didn’t matter what my body looked like. I was valued for trying to create space where intersex people could celebrate joyfully. Millions of people said the flag allowed them their allyship. That really impacted me.’





‘Gender is always something that has been put on me’

Martha Summers is an architect, artist and leatherworker, living and working in London. They are the designer of a number of queer community spaces, including the London LGBTQ+ Community Centre, and the artist behind TOOLbelt, a dyke-camp sculpture that combines a strap-on harness with a builder’s toolbelt.

‘I can remember waking up one day, aged 15, and thinking “I need to stop being myself.” I’d moved schools three times and, for survival, I decided to become someone entirely different to make my life bearable. I continued with that until I was 25. I had boyfriends and long hair, and I was working as hard as I could to be a straight woman. In 2016, there was a personal and political shift, and I felt able to explore who I was. I came out as a lesbian and, now I describe myself as a butch dyke who is a-gender, which essentially means I don’t have a gender identity. Gender is something other people have put on me – even when I wore a skirt I would be misgendered. There was always something about me that made me unconvincing as a cis woman.

‘These days, I just want to do what feels good for my body. I feel like I’ve quit gender as much as you can. I let the natural butchness I was born with come out, particularly in queer spaces where I feel I’m speaking a language that others understand. Unfortunately, I am not always treated with respect – I now cannot use gendered bathrooms, as every single time I have used a women’s bathroom there was some sort of incident. I never know how I am going to be treated.

‘Queer selfhood is like DIY. You can’t just go into a shop and have your identity served to you, you have to go and find what speaks to you. I’ve now found different hacks that make my body feel like my home. I find summer trickier so, for swimming, I wear a rash vest, which is tight but in a butch way. I also adapt many of my clothes, using my sewing machine. But when I do find something that just fits in the first place that’s an incredible feeling. That’s why I love my strap-on harness. It’s not so much a sex toy, but a tool that instantly connects me to my body. When I was younger, I was constantly performing, trying to fit in. But now? I’m just vibing.’ ◆

MAKEUP: CHARLIE FITZJOHN AT W ARTISTS USING LISA ELDRIDGE. MAKEUP FOR BEL PRIESTLY: SASHA KILBY. HAIR: SKY CRIPPS-JACKSON AT THE WALL GROUP USING RE=COMB. FASHION EDITORS: MADDY ALFORD, JODIE DUNWORTH. PHOTO ASSISTANTS: LILY SADIN, CLARE LEWINGTON. MAKEUP ASSISTANT: SAINT MARETTO. HAIR ASSISTANT: BEYANA ANGELOVA

The 2024 Cosmopolitan Summer Beauty Awards

There really isn't much the *Cosmopolitan* beauty team won't do in the name of discovering the very best products... We've swatched, swiped and spritzed hundreds of the newest beauty drops (tough job, huh?) and we can officially say, without a shadow of a doubt, that these products are worth every penny. We don't have the time (or money) to waste on 'meh' beauty buys. We want results, and we want them fast

WORDS: VICTORIA JOWETT, KEEKS REID, CHARLOTTE BITMEAD, ELENA CHABO AND LIA MAPPOURA
PHOTOGRAPHY: ROWAN FEE

Body

Indulge your skin from top to toe with these skin-loving lotions, supercharged scrubs and bronzing body creams

INSTANT SELF TAN

Bali Body Instant Tan Cream, £30
Fancy extending that summer glow for a couple of months? Yep, we see you. Bali Body's creamy, decadent instant tan is a winner for giving a deep bronze glow in seconds.

SELF TAN

Iconic London Prep-Set-Tan Tanning Mousse, £24
Available in two shades (a light sunkiss or a deeper bronze), this golden formula with vegan tanning agents gives the most natural-looking glow.

SUN CREAM

Garnier Ambre Solaire Ideal Bronze Milk-In-Spray SPF50, £14
Allow us to intro you to the sexiest sun spritz ever, with hydrating vitamin E for silky, not sticky, skin.

BATH SOAK

Neom Perfect Night's Sleep Wellbeing Soak Multi-Vitamin Bath Oil, £45
Packed with soothing essential oils such as lavender, chamomile and patchouli, this is just dreamy.

RICH BODY CREAM

Sol de Janeiro Delícia Drench Body Butter, £48
Thick and whipped, this sumptuous cream is the perfect antidote for summer skin that has become dry due to sun, sea and sand.

BODY LOTION

Molton Brown Sunlit Clementine & Vetiver Body Lotion, £30
This lightweight yet hydrating lotion makes you feel like you're walking through a field of clementine trees.

SHOWER CREAM

L'Occitane Almond Delicious Whipped Shower Cream, £17.50
Left limbs quenched and refreshed. The unique whipped foam-like texture is like nothing we've tried before.

SHOWER GEL

The Body Shop Peppermint Shower Gel, £8
Whatever activity you're hot and sweaty from, this shower gel will cool as it cleanses. Win, win.

LIGHTWEIGHT BODY CREAM

Elizabeth Arden Eight Hour Daily Hydrating Body Lotion, £27
Try this for the kind of hydration that you can slather on and still pull on jeans immediately.

BODY SCRUB

Estrid The Essential Exfoliant, £7.95
A smart body buffer if ever we saw one, this has both physical and chemical exfoliating ingredients, plus nourishing avocado oil to leave skin smooth.

BODY OIL

Augustinus Bader The Geranium Rose Body Oil, £85
Leaving skin as soft as a baby's bottom, this luxe body oil, with geranium and rose infusions, is the secret to self-care.

ART DIRECTOR: JADE COOPER-COLLINS. PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY

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LASH SERUM

Benefit Whoop Lash Serum, £47
Impatient? Then this is for you. With a blend of plant extracts, rice protein and vitamins, it gave quick results in volume and length.

ANTI-AGEING SERUM

Elizabeth Arden Retinol + HPR Rapid Skin Renewing Serum, £83
No need to worry about the Retinol uglies with these – they're perfect for first-time users.

HYDRATING SERUM

Dermalogica Pro-Collagen Banking Serum, £89
Moisturising and plumping, this helps combat age, pollution and sunlight damage.

HYDRATING TONER

Byoma Hydrating Milky Toner, £11.99
A similar texture to the excess juice you find in sheet masks, this is packed with hydrating polyglutamic acid and neutralising cica.

EXFOLIATING TREATMENT

Ren PHA Exfoliating Facial, £34
Enzymes brighten, while exfoliants give skin a glow and fade pigmentation. Suitable for sensitive skin, too.

ANTI-AGEING FACE SPF

Mecca To Save Face SPF50+ Brightening Sun Serum, £38
We reckon the S in SPF stands for silky after trying these drops. A perfect base for makeup.

LIGHTWEIGHT MOISTURISER

Simple Active Skin Barrier Care Soothing Water Cream, £9.99
It's a hard line to toe, keeping your face cream lightweight while actually hydrating your skin. Luckily, this cream does both.

PIGMENTATION SERUM

La Roche-Posay Mela B3 Intensive Anti-Dark Spot Serum, £48
Prevention and cure – 10% niacinamide improves the look of pigmentation, while Melasyl active intercepts excess melanin.

ON-THE-GO FACE SPF

Caudalie Vinosun Protect Invisible High Protection Stick SPF50, £16
This non-greasy little wonder is perfect for face, lips, hands and anywhere that needs frequent SPF top-ups.

DECONGESTING TONER

Paula's Choice 6% Mandelic Acid + 2% Lactic Acid Liquid Exfoliant, £35
Akin to her iconic older sister, the BHA, this liquid exfoliant has alpha hydroxy acids for gentle resurfacing.

MAKEUP REMOVER

Ulé Le Make Off, £34
Packed with soothing colloidal oatmeal and replenishing wheat ceramides, this tackles the toughest mascaras without upsetting skin. Like a kitten licking off your makeup (we imagine!).

DETOX FACE MASK

Fenty Skin Cherry Dub Blah 2 Bright 5% AHA Face Mask, £32
'Blah blah' is what you'll say to anyone who tries to convince you of a more texture-smoothing, clarifying face mask. 'Tis a cherry-scented jelly of dreams.

RICH MOISTURISER

The Inkey List Bio-Active Ceramide Moisturizer, £19
It soothes, it hydrates, it restores; this nourishing formula is like rehab for intensely dry or compromised skin. Rich without being heavy.

FIRMING SERUM

Kate Somerville KateCeuticals Super Cell Rejuvenation Serum, £84
Contains a vegan stem cell complex that works to stimulate collagen production, boosting skin elasticity.

FACE TANNING SERUM

Charlotte Tilbury Island Glow Easy Tanning Drops, £38
Of course, Charlotte would concoct the most flawless tanning serum. Moisturising, plumping and smoothing.

BLEMISH TREATMENT

Indeed Labs In-Patch Hydrocolloid Blemish Patches, £9.99
Not only do these stop you picking, but the niacinamide and tea tree oil draw out impurities.

LIP BALM

Fresh Sugar Advanced Therapy Lip Rescue Ointment, £24
Oh, sugar, sugar – you are my candy girl... and a scientifically proven ingredient that provides long-lasting hydration. Pucker up!

MATTIFYING FACE SPF

Garnier BHA+ Niacinamide Daily UV Fluid SPF50, £12.99
Niacinamide? In a face SPF? Yes. We're not only protecting our skin from the sun, but treating fine lines and texture.

BARRIER REPAIR CREAM

Drunk Elephant Bora Barrier Repair Cream, £62
If you've gone overboard on active ingredients, try this rich, velvety and nourishing cream.

REPAIRING SERUM

Murad Cellular Hydration Repair Serum, £72
Skin always dry? This serum restores damage by emulating barrier-strengthening peptides that reduce water loss.

CALMING SKIN BALM

CeraVe Advanced Repair Ointment, £11
This comfort blanket for your complexion has ceramides and hyaluronic acid to target peeling or chapped skin.

DARK SPOT TREATMENT

L'Oréal Paris Bright Reveal Dark Spot Exfoliant Peel, £31.99
Introducing the 'snake peel' effect... This product helps shed dead skin for a fresh complexion.

MOISTURISING FACE MASK

Laneige Bouncy & Firm Sleeping Mask, £32
Famous for its epic lip mask, Laneige has channelled all that good stuff into a skin-soothing, face mask.

BRIGHTENING FACE MASK

Mantle The Miracle Mask, £81
It's another level glow booster with a powerhouse of ingredients including marshmallow root.

Skincare

In the battle of A* skincare, these formulas came out on top

01. EYE RESCUE SERUM

Summer Fridays Jet Lag Overnight Eye Serum, £46
This hydrating, brightening formula swiftly overhauls zombie eyes. It's as good as the brand's face mask.

02. ALL-ROUND FACE WASH

Rhode Pineapple Refresh Cleanser, £28
With green tea and pineapple enzyme, this balmy cleanser lathers up for that refreshing, gel wash feeling, without any stripping effects.

03. REDNESS CALMING SERUM

Beauty Pie Happy Face 10% Azelaic Acid Skin-Clearing Gel-Cream, £22
Struggling with redness or sensitive skin? Try this game-changing tube for a soothing solution.

Hair

Meet the gloss-boosting hair saviours to transform both your strands and scalp

01. SCALP DETOXIFIER

Straand The Crown Fix Serum, £20

Itchy, flaky scalp begone. This light, easy-to-apply serum relieves scalp issues and restores the skin's microbiome. A total must-have for healthy hair growth.

02. HEAT PROTECTION SPRAY

Zara Hair Blow Dry Spray, £15.99

Not only does this spray protect strands from hot tools, but it also delivers invisible nourishment. Saturate from root to ends and activate with heat to reveal a shiny finish.

03. HAIR OIL

Hair By Sam McKnight Love Me Do Nourishing Oil, £32

Heat + oil + summer doesn't sound like a winning formula for your hair but I promise, smoothing on this lightweight formula will leave it glistening and more importantly, frizz-free.

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VOLUME SPRAY

Bumble and Bumble Thickening Dryspun Texture Spray Light, £31
If the hair assignment is amplified body and tousled texture, this air-light spray gets an A* grade.

DRY SHAMPOO

K18 AirWash Dry Shampoo, £48
Excuse the oxymoron, but this liquid dry shampoo is like nothing ever before. The grease-busting technology is the ultimate lazy girl hair saviour.

DETOX SHAMPOO

Living Proof Clarifying Detox Shampoo, £31
Whether it's a sweaty scalp or gel build-up, this shampoo cleanses it all away without totally stripping moisture from your hair and scalp.

CURLY WASH DUO

Redken Bonding Curls Shampoo & Conditioner, £25.70 each
The popular Acidic Bonding Concentrate now includes curl-specific products for a drastic curl revamp.

MOISTURISING HAIR WASH DUO

Cécred Hydrating Shampoo, £30 and Moisturizing Deep Conditioner, £38
This uber-nourishing mix can leave even the driest strands silk-like. Thanks, Beyoncé.

LIGHTWEIGHT CONDITIONING MASK

Før The Liquid Glossing Hair Treatment Water, £24
Rinse over lengths (post-shampoo) to give super-dull locks a new lease of life in just eight seconds.

DEEP CONDITIONING MASK

Adwoa Baomint Deep Conditioning Treatment, £40
Renourish your locks with the goodness of shea butter, rosemary oil, baobab oil and mint.

HAIR REPAIRING SERUM

Virtue Damage Reverse Serum, £59
Infused with peptides to repair fried strands with hair-mimicking proteins, this light cream-to-serum formula is seriously high-tech.

LEAVE-IN SMOOTHING CREAM

Tresemmé Lamellar Shine Leave-In Cream Serum, £7
Loaded with coconut and macadamia oils, yet lightweight and non-greasy, this cream gives hair some serious shine.

HAIR GEL

Arkive The Headliner Modern Definition Gel, £13
Bringing the best out of curls and making egg-head hair chic, this gel works for all hair types. Think: definition without crunch and style without flakes.

CURL DEFINER

Clean Curls Super Shine and Define Curl Custard, £11.99
This non-sticky, non-flaking custard gives curls easy hold and definition with the added benefit of aloe vera juice to help to strengthen strands.

COLOUR REFRESHING GLOSS

Redken Acidic Color Gloss Activated Glass Gloss Treatment, £32.50
Colour fade is real and this salon-quality kit helps to restore the shine you left your colourist's chair with.

SHINE-BOOSTING TREATMENT

L'Oréal Paris Elvive Glycolic Gloss 5-Minute Lamination, £15.99
Nope, glycolic isn't just excellent for skincare; this new rinse-off treatment proves it can also help give us our smoothest wash day yet.

HYDRATING HAIR SERUM

Kérastase Première Repairing Anti-Frizz Filler Serum, £50.50
Use pre-styling to seal and fill your hair, as well as for heat protection. But, wow, put a bit in your dry frizzy ends and watch splits disappear.

PRE-SHAMPOO TREATMENT

L'Oréal Professionnel Metal Detox Pre-Shampoo, £35
Adding to the much-adored detoxifying range, this breaks down metal particles that can trigger colour change and breakage.

HAIR ACCESSORY INNOVATION

Gymshark Diffuse Sweat Headband, £20
No more planning workouts around hairdos to avoid sweat damage. This band can stretch to fit braids and locks and can fold out to cover your whole head.

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MATTE FINISH FOUNDATION

Fenty Soft Lit Naturally Luminous Longwear Foundation, £30
A velvety-but-luminous formula with the matte coverage and durability of Fenty's OG foundation.

DEWY FINISH FOUNDATION

Revolution Skin Silk Serum Foundation, £10.99
This peptide-rich formula comes in 20 shades, is seamless to blend and feels like you're not wearing a scrap of makeup.

SATIN FINISH FOUNDATION

e.l.f. Camo Hydrating CC Cream, £15
Packed with goodies such as vitamin B5 and hyaluronic acid, this offers way more than coverage. Expect bright, even skin in seconds.

TINTED MOISTURISER

Kosas BB Burst Tinted Gel Cream, £34
This skingredient-packed formula has buildable coverage with a feather-light feel.

LENGTHENING MASCARA

Rimmel Wonder'Bond Bonding Serum Mascara, £11.99
No serum, no problem. Rimmel has combined all the good stuff to reduce lash loss.

GLOW-BOOSTER

Dior Forever Glow Star Filter, £45
That feeling when you've had a facial, eight hours' sleep and a vitamin-packed smoothie. Yeah, us neither. Dior has faked it with this subtle illuminating base.

SHEER LIP GLOSS

Max Factor 2000 Calorie Lip Glaze, £9.99
Non-sticky, high-shine, super moisturising and a stunning subtle shade selection. What more could you ask for? This is fast becoming our most-reached-for.

SETTING POWDER

Ciaté London Extraordinary Setting Powder, £18
No creasing to see here. This fine formula brightens tired peepers and sets your concealer at the same time.

LIFTING MASCARA

Refy Lash Sculpt, £20
This groundbreaking brush looks a little phallic, but don't let it distract you from the super-natural long lash result that holds up your lashes like scaffolding.

LIP-PLUMPING GLOSS

Haus Labs PHD Hybrid Lip Glaze, £22
Gone are the days of ouch-inducing lip volumisers. This plumping gloss is made with a clever complex that allows for tingle-free fullness.

EYESHADOW PALETTE

Urban Decay Galactic Cowgirl Moondust Quad Eyeshadow, £39
This quad of shadows is as ultra-shimmery on the lid as they are in the pan. Get your spacesuit on for a trip outta this world.

LIP & CHEEK STAIN

Milk Makeup Cooling Water Jelly Tint, £22
So enticing that half of TikTok has actually tried biting them, these cool-to-touch jelly-textured tints provide a splash of colour that stays put.

VOLUMISING MASCARA

L'Oréal Paris Panorama Mascara, £13
Fuller, thicker lashes without huge clumps? Sounds suss. But this delivers – with bigger lashes in two strokes.

FULL-PIGMENT LIP GLOSS

NYX Duck Plump High Pigment Lip Gloss, £10.50
While most of the best lip glosses are clear or tinted, NYX has nailed a richly pigmented glossy liquid lip that still fires up that pout.

BOLD LIPSTICK

Merit Signature Lip Matte, £28
Delivering a velvety pout in just one swipe, this balmy formula is packed with hyaluronic acid, so your lips won't look shriveled by lunch.

SHEER LIPSTICK

Tatcha The Kissu Lip Tints, £35
From the sleek, fancy packaging to the cushiony, moisture-packed formula, these may be the most luxe lippies we've ever tried...

GLOWY BLUSH

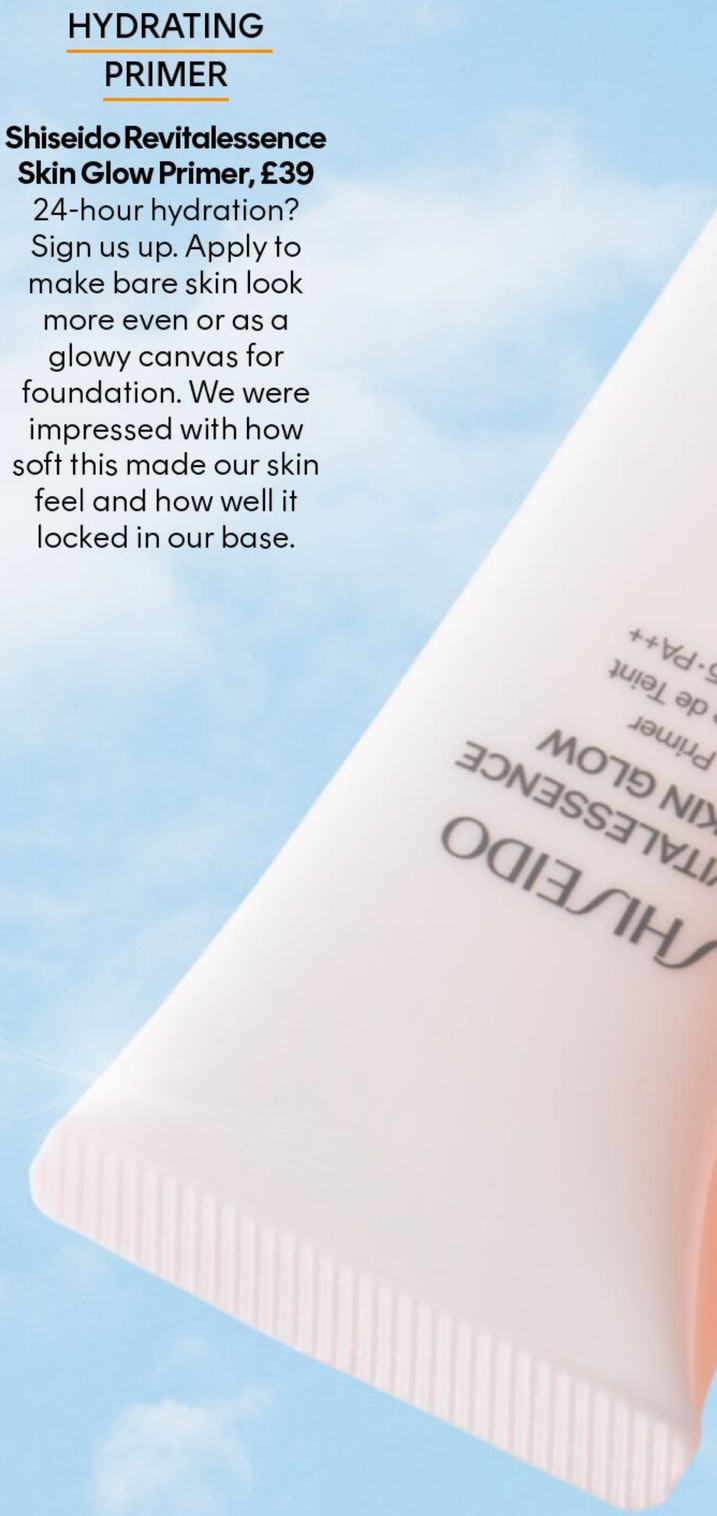
Revlon Illuminance Gel Serum Blush, £9.99
Turn up the heat on your blush with ease – this leaves a glowy, soft-focus effect on your skin and it's fuss-free to blend and buildable.

BRONZER

Morphe Sun & Done Smooth-Gliding Bronzer Stick, £12
These melt into skin so beautifully, in clever tones for shadow and glow – perfect for on-the-go radiance top-ups.

HYDRATING PRIMER

Shiseido Revitalessence Skin Glow Primer, £39
24-hour hydration? Sign us up. Apply to make bare skin look more even or as a glowy canvas for foundation. We were impressed with how soft this made our skin feel and how well it locked in our base.



Makeup

These glow-giving essentials have more than earned their spots in our summer beauty bag

LONG-WEAR BROW SETTER

Anastasia Beverly Hills Brow Freeze Gel, £24
This baby is perfect for brushing brows up for a bushy look. Plus, no flaking come 5pm (or 5am for the party gals).

LONG-WEAR PRIMER

Danessa Myricks Yummy Skin Water Powder Serum, £38
Control shine and create a base to withstand any temp with this formula that sets like a silky powder.

LIQUID EYELINER

Lisa Eldridge Kitten Flick Liquid Eyeliner, £25
With a nib as fine as a cat's whisker, this pen makes it effortless to create a sharp wing with a flick of the wrist. It's ultra-flexible, giving you control and allowing you to get into every nook.

LIP LINER

Hourglass Shape and Sculpt Lip Liner, £30
Somehow this matte liner glides on super creamy with no snagging, but then doesn't budge or smudge at all? It's witchcraft, but it's good magic.

LIP CRAYON

Nars Powermatte High-Intensity Lip Pencils, £24
This is not the matte you know. The longwear finish never looks dry and the clever shape means you can line and fill with one product.

LIP OIL

Gisou Honey Infused Tinted Lip Oil, £24
Yes, this features Mirsalehi honey and is a nourishing treat for your lips. But OMFG they're so pretty, on your lips and in the tube. The sparkling Watermelon Sugar is art.

BROW DEFINER

Benefit Precisely My Brow Detailer, £22.50
The cult pencil's new 0.8mm companion is the smallest on the market with a teeny protective tube that retracts to allow ultra-fine strokes.

UNDER-EYE CONCEALER

Saie Slip Tint Radiant All-Over Concealer, £22
Designed for brightening, this medium-coverage concealer delivers the glowy undereye rescue of a lightweight option.

FULL COVERAGE CONCEALER

Makeup By Mario SurrealSkin Awakening Concealer, £30
Forgo your foundation and use this for pinpoint concealing that actually lasts. In 22 shades.

FALSE LASHES

Eylure Underlash Salon Extension Kit, £20
Hitting the trifecta of falsies innovations, this kit comes with seven-day glue and is designed for the viral under lash technique for invisible wear.

PRESS ON NAILS

Opi XPress/On Nails, £15.99
These press-on kits feature 30 nails of varying sizes, are fuss-free to apply, need no filing to fit and can last up to two weeks. Acrylics, eat your heart out.

NAIL POLISH

Jones Road Nail Polish Kit, £44
When *the* Bobbi Brown says these are the chicest shades for nails, who are we to disagree? Simple, elegant and chic, it's a trio of nail dreams.

Fragrance

Our pick of this year's most stunning scents, prepare to smell like heaven

01

02

FLORAL

Jo Malone Red Hibiscus Cologne Intense, £106 for 50ml
A summer holiday in a bottle, this mixes vibrant red hibiscus, sweet vanilla and fragrant jasmine. Feel like you're transported to a tropical beach in just one spritz.

FRESH

Dior Miss Dior EDP, £68 for 30ml
Mandarin, jasmine and woody amber notes combine for a fresh scent that makes us feel like we're forest bathing. Recently revamped and still iconic.

WOODY

Tom Ford Private Blend Vanille Fatale EDP, £290 for 50ml
Roasted barley, coffee and frangipani may sound like your grandma's pantry, but this unisex scent is actually boozy, luxe and delicious.

FRUITY

Ysl Black Opium EDP Over Red, £68 for 30ml
With black coffee and bursts of cherry, this is the evolution of the OG It Girl, into glamorous aunt. The young, forever-cool, rich aunt (so basically Kendall Jenner).

01. SPICY

Chloé Nomade Nuit d'Egypte EDP, £95 for 50ml
Powerful notes of myrrh blended with the warm scents of cinnamon and ginger make for a sensory delight. Just a few spritzes will spice up any room.

02. SWEET

Phlur Mood Ring EDP, £96 for 50ml
With notes of 'fruit gummies', this is one for those with a sweet tooth. The amber in the mix adds a sophisticated twist and means it dries down to a very tasteful nostalgic sweet escape.

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BLOW-DRY STYLER

Dyson Airstrait Straightener, £449.99
A one-of-a-kind hair gadget that uses air instead of hot plates to smooth strands – so you don't have to worry about the damage. It's a game-changer, guys.

HAIR DRYER

Babyliss 2300 Styler Dryer, £90
This powerful dryer tackles all hair types with its 122km/h airspeed, so you spend less time drying your hair and more time getting people to feel how smooth it is.

MULTI-PURPOSE HAIR STYLER

Remington One Straight & Curl Styler, £129.99
Unsure if you want beachy waves or pin-straight strands? We got you. Flick a switch to turn this hair straightener into a curling wand. Just wow.

FACIAL CLEANSING DEVICE

Geske Sonic Thermo Facial Brush & Face Lifter, £59.95
Get the deepest of cleanses with this hardworking tool featuring warming pore-opening tech and microcurrent pulses to lift and stimulate skin.

HAIR STRAIGHTENER

Ghd Chronos, £289
No, seriously this is your sleekest hair ever. Thanks to some nifty new tech (erm, hello, unparalleled heat monitoring accuracy) you can get smooth, shiny hair with just one pass.

IPL HAIR REMOVAL DEVICE

Braun Skin i-Expert Pro 7, £859.99
If you're after a hairless summer (your body hair, your choice), an IPL device is the way to go. This communicates with an app on your phone to tell you when you're doing it right.

FACIAL TOOL INNOVATION

Foreo Kiwi Derma, £149
What do you get when you combine the suction of a vacuum with microdermabrasion technology? Why, rich in collagen, firm, fresh and radiant-looking skin, ofc! Suck and glow, friends.

Tools and tech

Check out these innovative game-changers that are guaranteed to upgrade your beauty regime

island in the sun

Counting down to your summer hols? Us, too. On our packing list: psychedelic surf prints, shades of zingy citrus, teeny bikinis and stripes galore. See you at the beach...

PHOTOGRAPHY: ROSALINE SHAHNAVAZ
FASHION EDITOR: MADDY ALFORD

LILI WEARS
Bikini top,
Paramidonna.
Bottoms, Triangl.
Thick-beaded necklace,
Pura Utz.
Thin-beaded necklace,
Marte Frisnes

STEPHANIE WEARS
Bikini top, Toco Swim.
Bottoms, Farai London.
Earrings, Pandora
(worn throughout).
Gemstone necklace,
Monica Vinader.
Beaded necklace,
Pura Utz.
Body chain,
Hunkemöller

Bikini top, Triangl. Bottoms, Seafolly. Trousers, Alémais. Beaded necklace, Pura Utz. Gemstone necklace, Monica Vinader. Shell necklace, Anni Lu. Sandals, Loeffler Randall

READ Summer fashion

Bikini top, Form and Fold. Trousers, Damson Madder. Bikini bottoms, Toco Swim. Clover necklace, Sandralexandra. Gemstone necklace, Monica Vinader

LILI WEARS
Bikini top and bottoms, both Damson Madder. Necklace, Marte Frisnes. Sunglasses, Oakley

STEPHANIE WEARS
Bikini top, Calzedonia. Bottoms, Good American. Necklace, Talis Chains. Ring, Ninfa

Top, Kujten. Bikini top, Free People. Necklace, Marte Frisnes. Bag, Aarven. Watch (on bag), Swatch

READ Summer fashion

Bikini top and bottoms, both Hunkemöller. Trousers, Missoni. Necklace, Anna + Nina. Rings, both Pura Utz. Shoes, Ancient Greek Sandals

Top, Knit & Ting.
Bikini bottoms,
Farai London x
Uche. Sunglasses,
Jimmy Fairly

Top, Free People. Bikini top, Belle The Label. Bottoms, Triangl. Skirt, Luna Del Pinal. Pearl necklace, Talis Chains. Beaded necklaces, both Pura Utz

LILI WEARS
Top, Kujten.
Bikini bottoms,
Reina Olga.
Sandals, Teva

STEPHANIE WEARS
Top, Maje. Bikini top,
We Are We Wear.
Bottoms, Away
That Day. Bag,
Cotopaxi. Sandals,
Gramicci x Chaco

READ Summer fashion

Top, Fruity Booty.
Skirt, Rat & Boa.
Bikini bottoms,
Missoni. Hat,
By Far. Necklace,
Anni Lu. Rings,
both Pura Utz.
Bag, Luna
Del Pinal

Bikini top, Toco Swim. Bottoms, Oas. Cord necklace, Marie Lichtenberg. Gemstone necklace, Monica Vinader. Bracelet, vintage

Models: Lili at Freedom and Stephanie at Muse. Global editorial and brand director: Chloe O'Brien. Hair and makeup: Rachel Singer-Clark at The Only Agency using Chanel Summer 2024 Makeup Jardin Imaginaire and No.1 de Chanel Eye Serum. Production and casting: Sophie Leen. Photographer's assistant: Jem Rigby. Fashion assistant: Courtney Smith. Location: Ser Casasandra Holistic Home, Isla Holbox, Mexico @sercasasandra. With thanks to: British Airways

Sexy fiction

Summer's steamiest beach read

ILLUSTRATIONS: SOFIE BIRKIN

Rue

'Ladies, this is a genuine, non-rhetorical question: How do the two of you survive in the real world?'

I stared at Nyota's contemptuous expression, reflecting on the unique brand of humiliation that came with having one's best friend's little sister (who'd been repeatedly rebuffed when attempting to enter the backyard tree house; who'd publicly feasted on a booger at Christmas 2009; who'd been caught French-kissing a clementine in the linen closet a few short months later) question one's ability to carry out a productive existence.

Then again, back in the day, Tisha and I had been three whole years older than her, and we'd harboured a clearly misplaced superiority complex. We knew better now that little Nyota was 24, a law school prodigy, and a newly minted bankruptcy lawyer whose billable hours were worth more than my tragically high car insurance premium. To add insult to injury, I followed her on Instagram, which was how I knew she could bench-press more than her weight, looked incredible in a monokini, and regularly baked onion rosemary focaccia from scratch.

In a powerful flex whose brilliance kept me awake at night, Nyota had never followed me back.

'You know us,' I said, choosing honesty over pride. Tisha and I were holed up inside my closet-sized office at Kline, FaceTiming someone who'd probably never even saved our phone numbers.

Dignity was the least of our worries. 'We are barely hanging on.'

'Can you just answer the question?' Tisha bristled. As humbling as this was for me, it had to be much worse for her. Nyota was *her* sister, after all.

'Really? You call me in the middle of the workday to ask what a *loan assignment* is? You couldn't google it?'

'We did,' I said, omitting that we'd added *for dummies* to the search. And yet. 'We got the gist of it, we think.'

'Great, then you're golden. I'm hanging up, see you both at Thanksgiving—'

'However,' I interrupted. It was late May. 'The reactions of other Kline employees seem to suggest that we might not be fully grasping the implications of this *loan assignment*.' My threshold for odd was high, and I'd been able to brush off the HR rep brazenly browsing monster.com at his standing desk, the chemists who'd bumped into me face-first and run away with nary an oops, the vacant stare of my usually dictatorial boss, Matt, when I'd informed him that the report he was waiting on would take at least three more hours.

After practically inventing the whole women-in-STEM-in-romance thing, bestselling author **Ali Hazelwood** (who also casually has a PhD in neuroscience) is back with *Not In Love*, a hot-as-hell workplace drama about biotech engineer Rue Siebert and finance guy Eli Killgore and their... well, read for yourself, in this exclusive adaptation of the first two chapters

Then, while I was emptying my water bottle into a potted plant that had lived in the break room longer than I'd been in the workforce, a technician had burst into tears and suggested, *You should take Christofern home, Dr Siebert. It shouldn't die just because of what's about to happen to Kline*.

'OH MY GOD, HOW HAVE WE NOT TALKED ABOUT THE GUY'

I had *no clue* what was going on. All I knew was that I loved my current job at Kline, the most important project of my life was at a pivotal point, and I was too socially challenged to easily transition to another workplace. Today's event did not bode well. 'There's going to be an assembly in 15 minutes,' I explained, 'and we'd love to walk in with a better idea of what—'

'Ny, stop bitching and just regurgitate it for us like we're five,' Tisha ordered.

'You guys are *doctors*,' Nyota pointed out – *not* as a compliment.

'Okay, listen carefully, Ny, 'cause this will blow your mind and we might have to report it to the UN and have a trial at The Hague: the topic of private equity firms and loan assignments did *not* come up in *any* class during our chemical engineering PhDs. A *shocking* oversight, I know, and I'm sure NATO will want to take military action—'

'Zip it, Tish. You don't get to snark when *you* need something from *me*. Rue, how did you find out about the loan assignment?'

'Florence sent out a company-wide email,' I said. 'This morning.'

'Florence is Kline's CEO?'

'Yes.' It seemed reductive, so I added, 'And founder.' Still not exhaustive, but there was a time and place for fangirling, and this wasn't it.

'Did it say anything about which private equity bought your loan?'

I skimmed the body of the email. 'The Harkness Group.'

'Hmm. Rings a bell.' Nyota typed away in silence, the New York City skyline gleaming behind her. Her office was in a high-rise – thousands of miles and an entire universe from North Austin. Like Tisha and me, she'd been eager to get out of Texas. Unlike us, she'd never moved back. 'Ah, yeah. *Those* guys,' she said eventually, squinting at her computer screen.

'Do you know them?' Tisha asked. 'Are they, like, famous?'

'It's a private equity firm, not a K-pop band. But they *are* well known in tech circles.' She bit her lip. Suddenly her expression was the opposite of reassuring, and I felt Tisha tense beside me.

'This is not the first time something like this has happened,' I said, refusing to give in to panic. I had graduated from UT Austin a year earlier, but I'd been working for Florence Kline since before finishing my PhD. None of this felt new. 'There are management shake-ups and investor issues all the time. It always settles down.'

'Not sure about this time, Rue.' Nyota's brow creased into a scowl. 'Listen, Harkness is a private equity firm.'

'Still don't know what that means,' Tisha bristled.

'*As I was going to explain*, private equities are... groups of people with lots and lots of money and spare time. And instead of frolicking in their hard-earned cash Scrooge McDuck-style, or leaving it in savings accounts like the two of you—'

'Bold of you to assume I have savings,' Tisha muttered.

'—they use it to buy other companies.'

'And they bought Kline?' I asked.

'Nope. Kline hasn't gone public – you can't buy Kline's stocks. But back when it was founded, it needed money to develop... ravioli? Is that what you guys do?'

'Food nanotechnology.'

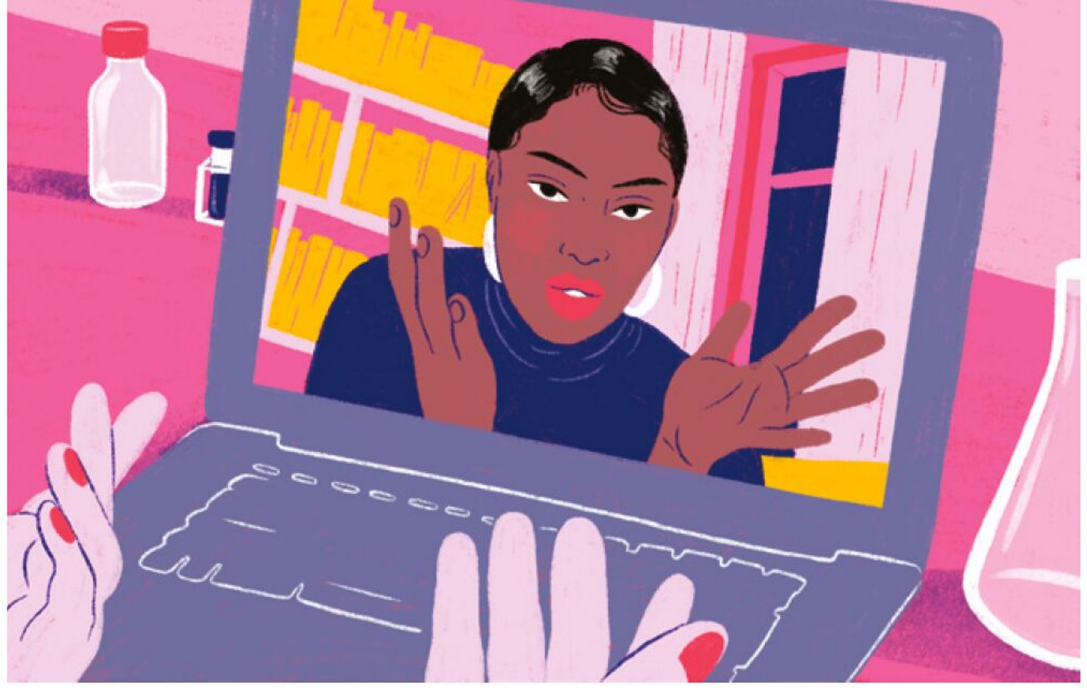
'Sure. Let's pretend that means something. Anyway, when Florence founded Kline, she got a big loan. But now, whoever gave her the money decided to sell that loan to Harkness.'

'Which means that now Kline owes the money to Harkness?'

'Correct. See, Rue, I knew you weren't *totally* useless. My sister, on the other hand, never ceases to...' Nyota's voice drifted as she frowned at her computer.

'What?' Tisha asked, alarmed. Nyota wasn't the type to stop mid-insult. 'What happened?'

'Nothing. I'm just reading up on Harkness. They're well respected. Focused on mid-size tech startups. I think they have



a couple of science guys on the inside? They acquire promising companies, provide capital and support to grow them, sell them for a profit. Buying a loan seems a little out of their MO.'

Tisha's fingers closed around my thigh, and I covered her hand with my palm. Physical comfort was rarely in my repertoire, but making exceptions for Tisha was no trouble. 'So all Florence needs to do is pay back the loan to Harkness, and Harkness will be out of the picture?' I asked. Seemed simple enough. No need to involve monster.com.

'Uh... in the rainbow world you live in, maybe. Have fun frolicking with the unicorns, Rue. There's no way Florence has the money.'

Tisha's grip tightened. 'Ny, what does it mean, in practice? Does it mean that they take control of the company?'

'Maybe. It'll depend on the loan contract.'

I shook my head. 'Florence would never let them do that.'

'Florence might not have a choice.' Nyota's voice softened abruptly, and that – out of everything, *that* made the first tinges of fear hook into my stomach. 'Depending on the terms of the agreement, Harkness might have the right to install a new CTO and seriously interfere in day-to-day operations.'

Asking what a CTO was wasn't going to get me any closer to an Instagram follow, so I just said, 'Okay. What's the bottom line?'

'Harkness might end up being a nonissue. Or it might be the reason you need to find new jobs. Right now, it's impossible to tell.'

Tisha's 'Fuck' was a soft muttering. *Florence*, I thought, and my mouth felt dry. *Where is Florence right now?* How *is Florence right now?* 'Thank you, Nyota,' I said. 'This was very helpful.'

'Call me after today's assembly – we'll have a better idea by then.' It was nice of her, that *we*. 'But it wouldn't hurt to start sprucing up your CV, just in case. Austin is a great place for tech startups. Look around online, ask your nerd friends if they have leads. Do you guys have any friends, aside from each other?'

'I have Bruce.'

'Bruce is a *cat*, Tish.'

'And your point?'

They started bickering, and I tuned them out, trying to calculate the likelihood of Tisha and me finding another job together. One that would pay well and afford us the scientific freedom we currently had. Florence had even allowed me to—

A horrifying thought stabbed at me. 'What about our personal projects? Employees' patents?'

'Mm?' Nyota cocked her head. 'Employees' patents? For what?'

'In my case, a bio-nanocomposite that—'

'Uh-huh, hold the TED Talk.'

'It's something that makes produce stay fresher. Longer.'

'Ah. I see.' She nodded in understanding, her eyes suddenly warmer, and I wondered what she knew. Tisha would never mention my history, but Nyota was observant and could very well have noticed on her own. After all, for years I'd spent every spare moment at their house, just to avoid returning to my own. 'This is *your* project? *Your* patent? And you have an agreement that guarantees *you* ownership of this tech?'

'Yes. But if Kline changes hands—'

'As long as the agreement is in writing, you're good.'

I remembered an email from Florence. Long words, small fonts, electronic signatures. Relief punched through me. *Thank you, Florence.*

'Guys, try not to sweat this too much, okay? Go to the assembly you're probably already late for. Find out all you can and report back. And for the love of Justice Brown Jackson, update your damn CVs. You haven't been a pet groomer since undergrad, Tish.'

'Get off my LinkedIn,' Tisha muttered, but she was flipping off an already blank screen. So she leaned back in her chair and settled for another subdued, 'Fuck.'

I stared ahead and nodded. 'Indeed.'

'Neither of us has the emotional constitution for job insecurity.'

'Nope.'

'I mean, we'll be all right. We're in tech. It's just...'

I nodded once more. We were happy at Kline. Together. With Florence.

Florence. 'Last night, Florence texted me,' I told Tisha. 'Asked if I wanted to go over to her place.'

She turned. 'Did she say why?'

I shook my head, feeling half-embarrassed, half-guilty. *Way to show up for your friends, Rue.* 'I told her I had plans.'

'What were you – oh, right. Your quarterly sex-up. Rue After Dark. Oh my god, how have we not talked about *the guy*.'

'What guy?'

'Really? You send me a picture of some dude's driver's licence and then ask *what guy*? Nice try.'

'It was a valiant attempt.' I stood, trying to avoid remembering deep-set blue eyes. That Grecian urn profile that had forced me to stare. The short brown curls, just this side of too messy. He'd kept his eyes straight ahead as he drove me home, as if adamant not to look in my direction.

'Have you heard from him? Assuming you did the unthinkable and' – she gasped, clutching her sternum – 'gave him your *number*.'

'I haven't checked my phone.' It now lived at the very bottom of my backpack, pressed under an extra hoodie, and my water bottle, and a stack of books that were due back at the library in two days. It was going to stay there, at least as long as I caught myself wondering every 10 minutes whether he had texted.

'I'D PROBABLY CHOOSE ORGASMS FOR YOU. I'M A GENEROUS SOUL LIKE THAT'

'*What*? He did *not* look like he'd be bad at sex!'

'I wouldn't know.'

She scowled. 'Isn't that what you met him for?'

'Originally.'

'And?'

'I don't know,' I whispered, as Tisha and I took a seat on a couch at the back of the room. 'I think that—'

'Never a dull fucking moment,' said a musical voice, and the cushion dipped on my left side. Jay was our favourite lab technician. Or, more accurately, Tisha's favourite, whom she'd swiftly befriended. By virtue of always being around her, I'd been folded into that relationship. It was the unabridged story of my social life. 'I swear to god,' he said, 'if they fire all of us and my visa falls through and I have to go back to Portugal and Sana breaks up with me—'

'Love the optimism, babe.' From the other side of me, Tisha leaned forward with a grin. 'We researched this whole mess, by the way. We can tell you what a loan assignment is.'

Jay's eyebrow arched, and the piercings speared through it flickered. 'You didn't know *before*?'

Tisha shrank back, disappearing behind me. 'There, there.' I patted her leg comfortingly. 'At least we've never pretended to be anything but what we are.'

A waterfall of red curls appeared in the crowd, and the knot of panic in my chest instantly loosened. Florence. Brilliant, resourceful *Florence*. She *was* Kline. She'd fought tooth and nail for it and wasn't going to allow anyone to take it from her. Certainly not some—

'Who are those four?' Tisha whispered in the sudden hush of the room. Her gaze had drifted past Florence, to the figures standing beside her.

'Someone from Harkness?' Jay guessed.

I had expected slicked-back hair, and suits, and that uniquely off-putting finance bro flair. The Harkness people, however, looked like they might have belonged at Kline in a different timeline. Maybe dressing down was just a power move on their part, but they seemed... normal. Approachable. The long-haired woman was at ease in her jeans and seemed pleased with the turnout, and so did the broad-shouldered man who stood just a little too close to her. The tall figure in the well-groomed beard surveyed the room a touch haughtily, but who was *I* to judge? I'd been told several times I didn't exactly inspire fuzzy warmth. And the fourth man, the one who joined the group last, gait unhurried and smile confident, he seemed...

The blood congealed in my veins.

'I already hate them,' Jay mumbled, making Tisha laugh.

'You hate *everybody*.'

'No, I don't.'

'Yes, you do. Doesn't he, Rue?'

I nodded absently, eyes stuck on the fourth Harkness man like a bird caught in an oil spill. My head spun and the room ran out of air, because unlike the others', his face was familiar.

Unlike the others, I knew exactly who he was.

'THE APP THEY WERE USING WASN'T FOR DATING, NOT BY ANY CORRECT MEANING OF THE WORD'

I liked to force myself to keep a certain detachment when it came to *he*s.

'I should have gone to Florence's,' I said, remorse prickling at the bottom of my stomach.

'Nah. Having to choose between you getting laid and having a heads-up on this here clusterfuck, I'd probably choose orgasms for you. I'm a generous soul like that.' Tisha lowered her voice as we walked side by side, treading down Kline's sea-blue, ultramodern hallways that teemed with employees, all heading toward the open space on the first floor. They all smiled at Tisha – and nodded at me, polite but much more sombre.

Kline had started out as a small tech startup, then quickly ballooned to several hundred employees, and I'd stopped keeping track of new hires. Plus, the solitary nature of my project made me a bit of an unknown quantity. The tall, serious, distant girl – who always hung out with the *other* tall girl, the funny and delightful one everybody loved. At Kline, Tisha's and my popularity levels were as mismatched as they'd been since elementary school. Luckily, I'd learned not to mind.

'Sadly,' I murmured, 'no orgasms were had.'

Eli

The previous night...

She looked even more beautiful than in her picture.

And she'd looked pretty fucking stunning in that, too, standing in front of a painfully familiar UT Austin sign. Not a selfie – a regular old-school photo, cropped to cut out her companion. All that was left was a slender, dark-skinned arm slung lazily around a shoulder. And, of course, *her*.

Smiling, but only faintly. There, but remote.

Beautiful.

Not that it mattered much. Eli had hooked up with enough people to know that a person's looks had a little less impact on the quality of casual sex than what that person was looking for. Still, when he arrived at the hotel lobby and spotted her at the bar, sitting straight on the tall stool, he stopped in his tracks. Hesitated, even though his meeting with Hark and the others had run behind, and dropping home to check on Tiny had put him a few minutes late.

She was drinking Sanpellegrino – a relief, since given their plans for the night, anything else would have given him pause. Her jeans and sweater were simple, and her posture was a thing of beauty. Relaxed, yet regal. Spine unbent, but not on edge. She didn't look nervous, and had the easy air of someone who did this often enough to know exactly what to expect.

Eli remembered her pertinent questions and straight-to-the-point answers. She'd messaged him the day before, with no emojis. No LOL or LMAO. Correctly placed punctuation and proper capitalisation. He'd guessed it was a localised quirk, but her

demeanour seemed like the embodiment of her writing.

Serious. A little impenetrable. Complicated.

And Eli had never been a fan of easy.

When he'd asked, *Where would you like to meet*? her response had been,

Not my apartment.

My place doesn't work either. I can book a hotel and cover the cost.

I'm okay with splitting.

No need.

Works for me, then. FYI, I'll share my location with a friend who has my login info to the app.

Please do. Would you like my phone number?

We can keep messaging here.

Sounds good.

Whatever made her feel safest. The dating app game could be dangerous. Then again, the app they were using wasn't for dating, not by any correct meaning of the word.

Eli glanced at the woman one last time, and something resembling the anticipation he used to be capable of rose inside him. He had no idea whether this woman was objectively, *scientifically* beautiful, or whether her face simply came together in a way that seemed to work perfectly for him. Either way, the result was the same.

A big fucking turn-on.

Good, he told himself. *This is going to be good.* He started walking again but stopped a few feet away.

When another man approached. ◆

Adapted from Not In Love, by Ali Hazelwood, to be published by Sphere on 11 June 2024 (paperback, £9.99)

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love

Dating diaries

Is there a single good man in this city?

Megan Barton-Hanson knows a thing or two about the search for love, but will a week of swiping find her a king or a catfish?

MONDAY

I like to think I have a pragmatic view on dating. This time last year I was in my 'dating furiously' era – I was on a mission to get a boyfriend. I'd go on dates every night, sometimes stacking them back-to-back. But now, I'm not in a hurry to settle, I'm trying to date with intention. I've lined up dates with guys from apps this week so maybe one of them could be 'the one'. First up, a drink with a chef. He seems interesting and he looks hot in his photos, so I'm looking forward to meeting him.

First impressions aren't great, we all love a short king but this guy has definitely lied on his profile about how tall he is. This kind of gives me the ick. Not because he's much shorter than he said he was, but because he lied about it. I ask him how his day's been and he says, 'Well, you know, just changing people's lives and making dreams come true.' I laugh, but he's not joking and he starts going on at length about how amazing he is. The ego on this man isn't attractive, I'm not feeling it at all. Next!

TUESDAY

Generally, I prefer to skip the chit-chat and just go for a drink to see if there's any chemistry. I can usually tell within the first 10 minutes if there's something there. In the past, I've stayed for half an hour, downed my drink and made a swift exit if there wasn't a spark. What can I say? I don't mess about. Recently, I was on a first date and he seemed nice, a bit boring maybe, but not a bad guy. Then I caught him slyly trying to take a photo of me. I challenged him on it.

He apologised but I thought to myself, does he even like me? Or did he just want a picture of the girl from *Love Island*? It hurt my feelings. Dating apps can make you feel like you're just another option, rather than someone men actually want to get to know. So my Hinge profile is ruthless at this point. I have a checklist of what I'm looking for: stable mental health, don't be a catfish and don't talk about anything sexual on the first date. I love sex, but there's a time and a place for that and I find it disrespectful when someone goes straight in with it.

WEDNESDAY

My date tonight is with another guy I've met on an app. I'm hoping it goes better than the last one. We go for drinks and he starts telling me about his gorgeous ex. Weird flex for a first date, I think. He tells me she was stunning, Spanish and she had a huge arse. 'Good thing I have a nice bum or you'd be making me feel insecure right now,' I quip. He laughs but carries on.

He says they broke up because she always wanted to go out to nice places

and he resented having to pay £15 for a cocktail every time they went on a date. The conversation is starting to make me feel uncomfortable. Why do we bother spending all this time getting dressed up for men who begrudge putting their hands in their pockets? You can't win as a woman. I pay for my own drinks and we go our separate ways. I don't think I'll see him again.

THURSDAY

Tonight, I've arranged a date with a footballer. He's definitely my type looks-wise and he's invited me for drinks at The May Fair Hotel. I like the cocktails there and I have a little laugh to myself thinking about how last night's date would probably hate them. When I get to the bar, my date texts me and says he's sorry but he's still in his room and has to finish some stuff up. He asks me if I want to go upstairs. I feel like the goalposts have been moved and this isn't what I was expecting. I think about how a younger version of myself might have been impressed by this, felt excited, even. But I'm wary of the situation now. I text back to see if he's being genuine and when it seems like he is, I head up. There's a porn star martini waiting for me when I arrive and I realise what his aim is here. He had no intention of going to the bar. I exchange pleasantries with him, drink my drink and leave the hotel. Another waste of makeup and he's definitely not 'the one'. On the taxi ride home, I have to check myself. Did I misread the situation? Am I setting my expectations too high? I feel like sometimes the strong boundaries I've developed might make me seem bitter or like I don't want to have fun. But I don't see why I should let men get away with not treating me nicely. It's the bare minimum, right?

'My Hinge profile is ruthless at this point'

FRIDAY

A new day, a new date and a new hope for love. I'm going for lunch with another sporty guy, a rugby player, and the conversation starts flowing instantly. The drinks are also flowing and after a few, he tells me that he thinks he might be bisexual. 'That's interesting,' I say. 'What led you to that conclusion?' He looks me right in the eye, takes a deep breath and then asks me, 'Have you ever pegged anyone? I think I'd really like to try it.'

Things were going so well and now I'm feeling flat. This is a first date but yet again, a guy thinks it's an anything goes situation. I try to be polite – I'm not here to kink shame – and change the topic of conversation. Then, I make my excuses and leave.

Tonight, I'm staying in as a matter of principle. As I'm relaxing at home, another match pops up and asks if I'd like to FaceTime. I'm looking pretty good, my hair is still done from my lunch date, so I agree. We chat for hours, but it feels like minutes, and I'm laughing so much. It feels nice to talk normally with someone, with none of the hypersexual chat. The conversation restores my faith in dating and we agree to meet up on Sunday.

SATURDAY

I don't rely solely on apps to meet people. I'm a confident person, so when I go out I'm always open-minded about meeting a potential match. I think it can be hard for men to approach women these days and guys often tell me they worry about women thinking they're creeps. But it's tough for everyone. I've lost count of the number of times I've caught eyes with someone but we'll just stare at each other all night, both afraid to make the first move. What did we even do before dating apps?

I head to the gym and while I'm thinking about all this, I spot someone who's always in there at the same time as me. I decide to go over and ask him if he'd like to train together sometime. But things don't go well at all. He seems suspicious of me, and then sputters out a reply, explaining that he's in the gym at different times so can't train with anyone. Then he leaves and I feel so embarrassed. I'm trying my hardest here, but nothing seems to be working.

SUNDAY

I'm hopeful about tonight's date. We've spoken on FaceTime but if this week has taught me anything, it's that you can be wrong about people.

My hope is that I can meet someone who just enjoys me for me and who I can have fun with. This guy seems like he could be that person and I think much more vetting was needed for the others, like, a lot more vetting.

So, let's see where things go. There must be at least one decent man in this city, I just have to find him first.

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY, UNSPLASH/DMITRY VECHORKO/IRIS LAURA. ARTWORK: JADE COOPER-COLLINS

Here's the real culprit behind your painful sex

A whopping 77% of our readers say they experience painful intercourse, but the reason isn't always obvious

WORDS: JILL HAMILTON

The old blanket advice for uncomfortable sex? 'Try more foreplay' and 'Use more lube.' Yeah, those can help, but what if you're already having 30-minute make-outs and going through tubes of the slick stuff and it still hurts? Follow this flowchart for actually helpful insight on what might be going on and how to make it stop.*

Where does it hurt the most?

On your vulva?

- Yes
- No, but really close to it...

Right inside your vagina?

Does it feel really tight?

- Yes
- No

Deep inside your vagina?

Have you had surgery or experienced tearing from sex previously?

- Yes
- No

PHOTOGRAPHY: STOCKSY. *SOURCES: MICHEAL INGBER AND HEATHER BARTO OF THEIR TIPS, BUT THIS ISN'T A SUBSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL ADVICE. IF THESE SOLUTIONS DON'T WORK AND/OR THE PROBLEM PERSISTS, GO TO YOUR DOCTOR

HOW TO MAKE A SITZ BATH
Fill your tub with a few inches of warm water and a handful of Epsom salts or bicarbonate of soda and sit(z) your bum down.

It's time to make an appointment with a GP. Seeing a doctor for any unexplained symptoms is now your best move. Just think about how much easier you'll be able to sleep (and have sex) once you've crossed this off your list.

IT COULD BE
Contact dermatitis.
YOUR PLAN
Take a sitz bath (see right). Does that work?

▼ Yes
YOU MAY PROCEED TO BONING

▼ No
You might have an infection.

IT COULD BE
An infected hair follicle.
YOUR PLAN
Try a sitz bath. If it gets worse, see your GP to rule out HPV or herpes. [Herpes usually feels more like a mouth ulcer – a valley, not a bump – and HPV warts aren't typically painful, so we really do mean 'rule out'.]

Can you feel a bump?
▼ Yes
▼ No

IT COULD BE
Vaginismus, a pelvic floor spasm that causes involuntary tightening of the vagina.
YOUR PLAN
Pelvic floor physical therapy – aka a massage for your vagina by a trained specialist – can relax your muscles and increase blood flow. Chat to your doc about it, so...

Does it feel like you're peeing glass?
▼ Yes
▼ No
You might have a UTI or yeast infection (likely) or chlamydia or gonorrhoea (less likely). Womp wah.

Can you see or feel a swollen bulge on either side of your vagina?
▼ Yes
▼ Dunno

IT COULD BE
A Bartholin's cyst caused by a clogged fluid duct.
YOUR PLAN
Try a sitz bath (see above left) or warm compresses. If that doesn't work, your doc may have to (yeah...) drain it.

IT COULD BE
A few things, including endometriosis, ovarian cysts, pelvic inflammatory disease or scar tissue.
YOUR PLAN
Have a GP check it out to confirm. Anything hurting in the lower third of your vagina needs an expert opinion.

IT COULD BE
Some leftover scar tissues from a previous trauma or injury.
YOUR PLAN
Physical therapy. Or consider surgery to clean out the damaged area so you can get your V back in the game.

Have you ever felt it when a penis or toy hits your cervix?
▼ Yes
▼ No

IT COULD BE
BDE, literally. Cervixes are super sensitive, so if they get hit the wrong way by a long penis or toy, it can cause some pain.
YOUR PLAN
Try a position that avoids cervical pressure.

MISSION POSSIBLE
Do it in missionary... but with your legs straight and pressed together slightly. Shallow penetration will feel less painful.

Does it feel like a deep ache or a sharp 'OMG, that effing hurts' ping?
▼ 'OMG, that effing hurts!'
▼ Deep ache

IT COULD BE
Cervicitis or pelvic inflammatory disease.
YOUR PLAN
Sis, you might need antibiotics.

Have you been diagnosed with endometriosis or ovarian cysts?
▼ Yes
▼ No

IT COULD BE
The positions in your routine aren't ideal.
YOUR PLAN
Switch it up with a fresh arrangement.

GET UP, STAND UP!
Stand up or lean on something, then have your partner enter you from behind to avoid pain points in your abdomen.

Does that help?
▼ Yes
YOU MAY PROCEED TO BONING
▼ No

Tell your partner to take it easy and also explore non-penetrative sexual pleasure together – there are lots of ways to get off that don't involve PIV. Did *that* work?
▼ Yes
YOU MAY PROCEED TO BONING
▼ WTF, it still hurts.

My best sex ever was embracing my bisexuality for the first time

I had never felt intimacy like it

I'm sitting in a very cramped, dark bar, bored. It's a Friday evening and I'm waiting for the act I came to see take to the stage. I'm not wearing my sexiest attire, just a black top, tartan trousers and my high-heeled Dr. Martens. After exchanging glances and smiles with a woman across the bar who looks cool and effortless in a light blue shirt and jeans, she comes over to me.

We talk for ages and my eyes drift to her lips throughout our conversation. She has cropped black hair and smells like floral perfume. While bonding over *Buffy The Vampire Slayer,* I find myself leaning towards her as she speaks and, before I know it, I'm asking to kiss her. Her answer is a coy smile and then it happens: frenzied, passionate kisses.

We rush to the toilets to grind madly on each other and I ask if she wants to come to my flat. This is huge for me. I've never kissed a woman, let alone asked one back to mine. I feel like I'm in unknown territory, and it's exciting and new, if not a bit clumsy – my legs are shaking.

We kiss the entire journey home, our hands barely losing contact with each other. It's like something has ignited within me. Her touch is like kindling, and I feel hungry and wild.

She asks for my permission at every step, every touch. Everything is softer, more tender than I'm used to – her body, her touch, her moans. She doesn't pounce on me; she isn't rough. There's no hair pulling or arse slapping. Instead, once we're back at my place, she lays me down gently and kisses me sensually, as if she's desperate to absorb every part of me. And, for the first time, I feel no insecurity.

Our kisses grow more heated, and my breath catches as her tongue slides down my neck. I groan. She understands what I need, and she's kissing down my stomach before I have to ask. It's electric, yet relaxing. She goes down on me, and it's never been like this before. There's no awkward, 'Oh, there. No, to the right.' No navigation. Her fingers pinch my nipples, and the combination of her touch in both places makes me hungrier for her. I twist so I'm riding her face, which pushes me quickly over the edge.

We're shaking by the end of our steamy session, having both orgasmed three times, and we lie there naked, talking and caressing each other. I was surprised how much of a turn on going down on her was, how much her pleasure fuelled mine. I've never felt so close to someone after sex. It feels so liberating. I've learned more about intimacy in one night than I have in nearly 30 years and I feel reborn.

It doesn't matter that we've never spoken again. She opened my eyes to my sexuality and what being bisexual means to me. I have a firmer grasp on my pleasure because of that experience – I'm no longer insecure about taking control. And I now know that one-night stands are actually much better with women.

WORDS: FLEUR LILLIOTT. ARTWORK: GETTY, FLORENCE OGRAM

Sorry not sorry... what's an apology language?

Find out which of the five categories you fall into

WORDS: LOIS SHEARING

When it comes to love languages – the theory that every person has one of five ways in which they like to receive love and affection – we're all clued up. Ours? It's gifts, every single time. But have you heard about apology languages? Conceived by marriage counsellor and pastor Gary Chapman (yes, the same guy who proposed the love languages theory), alongside psychologist Jennifer Thomas in their book *The 5 Apology Languages*, it looks at the different ways we reconcile conflict in our relationships – your partner knowing your apology language, i.e, how you best like to be apologised to (and vice-versa).

So, what can we learn from the concept? 'It can be a game changer in navigating conflicts,' says psychologist and relationship counsellor Kate Daly. Like love languages, apology languages can be a useful starting point to help you better communicate with your partner or even overcome disagreements. We're listening. Here, Daly breaks down each language and what they say about us.

Expressing regret

This is your classic 'I'm sorry,' which focuses on acknowledging your mistake and taking ownership of it. People who prefer this type of apology don't look to make amends or ask for forgiveness. Instead they want to focus on the emotional hurt caused. 'Empathy is everything. They prioritise validating the other person's feelings,' says Daly.

Accepting responsibility

This one is all about 'fessing up and being accountable for your actions. If you have this apology language, you value the gesture of vulnerability it takes to admit fault. 'People who prefer this language appreciate clear accountability and understanding of why things went wrong,' explains Daly.

Making restitution

People who prefer this form of apology are all about action. They may doubt the sincerity of an apology unless clear examples of how the apologiser plans on changing their behaviour are given. For them, 'following through holds more weight than just words', says Daly.

Sincere repentance

This is for the self-flagellators out there. It's all about growing from your mistakes. If this is how you apologise, you may appreciate explanations when others do you wrong. 'Fixing things in the moment isn't enough. They look for solutions to prevent a similar situation in the future,' says Daly.

Asking for forgiveness

This one's giving Carrie shouting 'You have to forgive me!' as she stands on Aidan's stoop. If this is your apology language, you'll likely understand the work that goes into forgiveness. But, Daly warns, 'Forgiveness shouldn't be demanded.' If you do receive it, 'acknowledge that you value that it shows respect and humility', she says.

SQUASHING THE BEEF

Whatever your apology language, Chance Marshall, a psychotherapist and co-founder of The Self Space, recommends approaching these categories 'critically' and remembering that all relationships are completely individual. 'Relationships thrive on open communication, empathy and a genuine effort to turn towards each other. The most important language in relationships is a shared one. A vocabulary that we create together. Beyond scripts, frameworks or formulas,' he says. Then again, it's always worth apologising if you've done something wrong...

PHOTOGRAPHY: STOCKSY

ESSENTIALS EDIT

This month's top tips

VIBRA HOTELS, PARADISE CLOSER THAN YOU THINK IN THE MAGICAL BALEARIC ISLANDS!

Touring the island of Ibiza you will find a Vibra Hotel in charming places that will leave you breathless. For example Vibra Cala Tarida, at the spectacular cove by the same name, a family-friendly hotel with a charming design. In San Antonio city the Vibra District outstands: an adults only situated in the center overlooking the sea. A groundbreaking hotel with a superb design and a fun sparkling atmosphere.

The Vibra Panoramic apartments in Ibiza city provide awe-inspiring views of Formentera. Situated near by at Playa d'en Bossa, the Vibra Algarb hotel, where you can almost touch the sea from the terraces! The hotel presents this season the fabulous Seahorse Beach Club, where you can indulge in a sea of temptations, a relaxed yet luxurious setting offering delicious culinary experiences at its beach restaurant.

In Mallorca, the Beverly Playa with direct access to the sand of Paguera beach, has splendid facilities for any type of celebration or event. Vibra's apartments in Menorca are an oasis of peace, sorrounded by beautiful gardens and few meters from the sea. Vibra Hotels, committed to responsible tourism, certified by Ecostars and Biosphere.

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SCHIRIN STYLE'S ANIME COLLECTION: WHERE FUTURISM MEETS FANTASY

The electrifying atmosphere of the Edison Ballroom in the heart of Times Square set the stage for the highly anticipated HiTechMODA Fashion Show Season 11 last February 9, 2024 during New York Fashion Week. Among the standout designers was Schirin Thoma, a young fashionista from Switzerland, whose Anime Collection took center stage. Blending elements of futuristic aesthetics with the whimsical charm of anime culture, Schirin Style's collection captivated the audience with its bold colors, innovative silhouettes, and futuristic print designs. As the lights dimmed and the music swelled, Schirin Style's Anime Collection left a lasting impression, solidifying her status as a rising star in the fashion world. **Follow her journey at schirinstyle.com**

CREDITS – Designer: Schirin Style @schirin.style | Event: hiTechMODA @hitechmoda Season 11 during NYFW | FEATURED MODELS: Schirin Thoma / @schirin.swiss / Switzerland with Sergio Delavicci @sergio_delavicci / NYC; Gina Senteler @gina_model_official / Switzerland (Solo) IMAGES: Joey Francois @uncannyphotos_ London PR: Ram Eagle @ram.eagle

STYLE EDIT

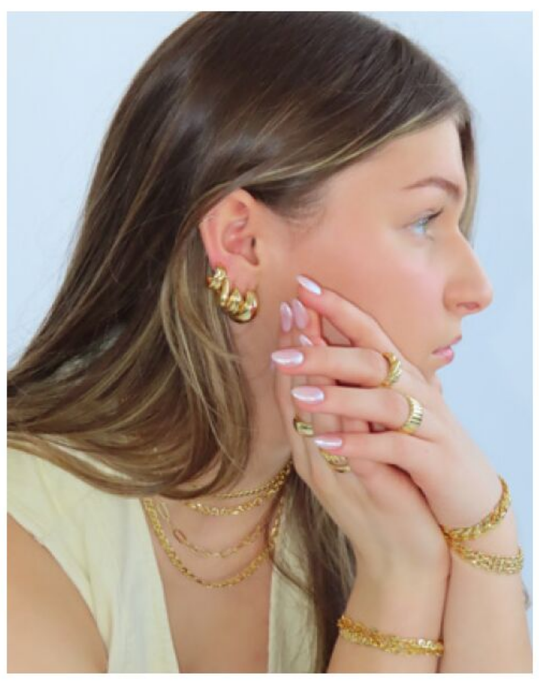
Look your best

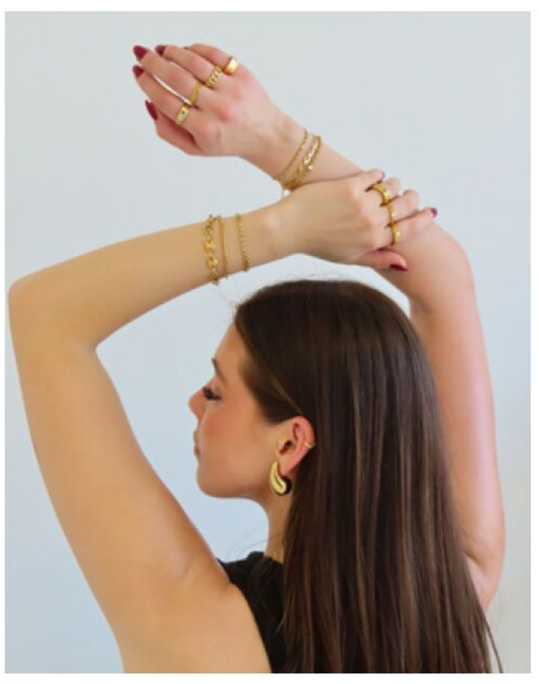
HOW CAN EVRY JEWELS EVEN DO THIS???

Evry Jewels, a female-founded company, is THE jewellery brand of the year! This viral TikTok jewellery brand is on a mission to create high-quality, trendy jewellery while keeping their pieces affordable and accessible to everyone.

You might recognise Evry Jewels from seeing their viral "Double Cross Me Necklace" or "Meribella Necklace", or from one of their several influencer jewellery collaborations! They have worked with celebrity-level influencers such as Francesca Farago from "Too Hot To Handle", YouTube sensation Tana Mongeau, Barbara Kristoffersen, the queen of aesthetic Instagram posts, and many more! Evry Jewels prides itself on transparency and being hands-on with the creation of all of their jewellery pieces. Founder Britt is deeply involved in every stage of the design process, ensuring that each piece is unique to the brand. When collaborating with influencers to create a jewellery piece(s), they are given complete creative freedom. This collaborative process sets them apart from others in the market, offering an unparalleled experience for both influencers and their valued community.

Evry Jewels is more than just a brand – it's a community. At the heart of Evry Jewels' success is their unwavering commitment to their customers. By prioritising inclusivity and accessibility, they've shattered the barriers that once stood between fashion lovers and high-quality jewellery.





With their rapidly growing community and frequent new arrivals paired with incredible sales, Evry Jewels is always on the lookout for more influencers to showcase their latest pieces and spread the word about their brand (because their pieces are WAY too cute to gatekeep ;)!

Whether you're familiar with Evry Jewels or not, here's some exciting news: they **want to collaborate with you!** If you're eager to collaborate with this viral jewellery brand, don't hesitate to check out their Ambassador Program by scanning the QR code and to shop their pieces!

Use code "**COSMO**" for extra money off your order.
P.S. This discount code can be stacked on top of any sale they are having! It's time to treat yourself!

BEAUTY EDIT

Look good, feel great

MAKING CONSCIOUS CHOICES KINDER TO ANIMALS

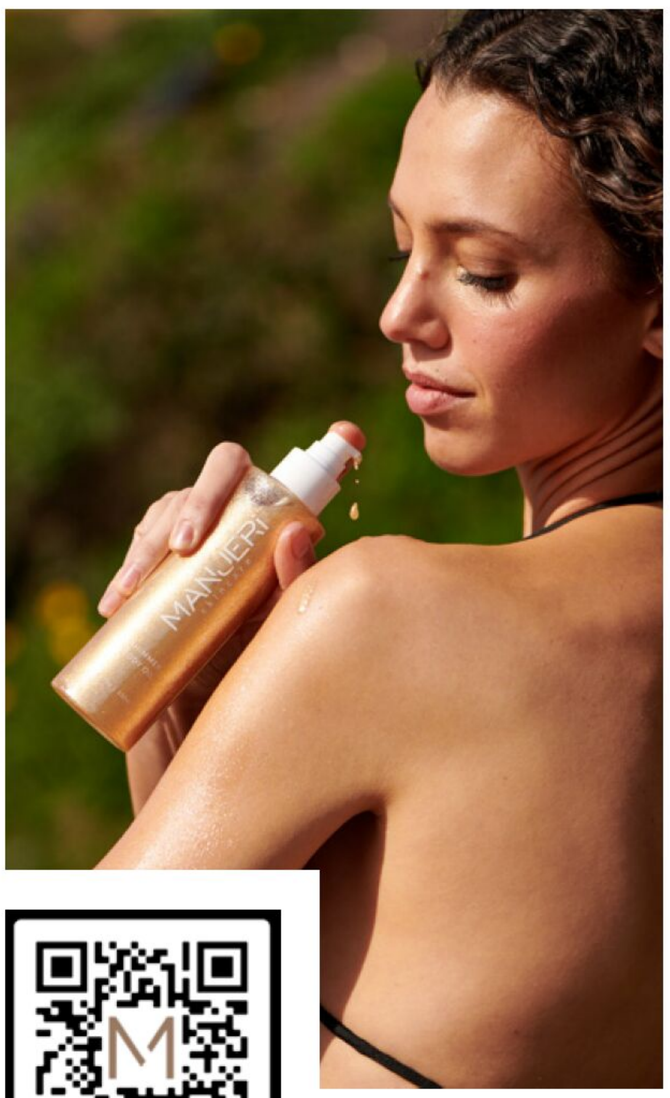
Interest in vegan beauty is at an all-time high after growing steadily over the last 10 years. Although it is predicted that the global vegan beauty market will be worth $25.3 billion by 2029, lots of people don't fully understand what vegan beauty is or why they should be looking out for it.

In 2023, The Vegan Society conducted a survey to discover whether people know about the animal-derived ingredients that might be lurking in their beauty products. Common animal-derived ingredients include beeswax, lanolin (sheep's wool), carmine (crushed beetles), gelatin (cow or pig bones, tendons or ligaments) and collagen (bones, skin, ligaments and tissues of cows). The survey found that only 30% of those surveyed knew what a 'vegan' label meant, which is a product that contains no animal products and has not been tested on animals.

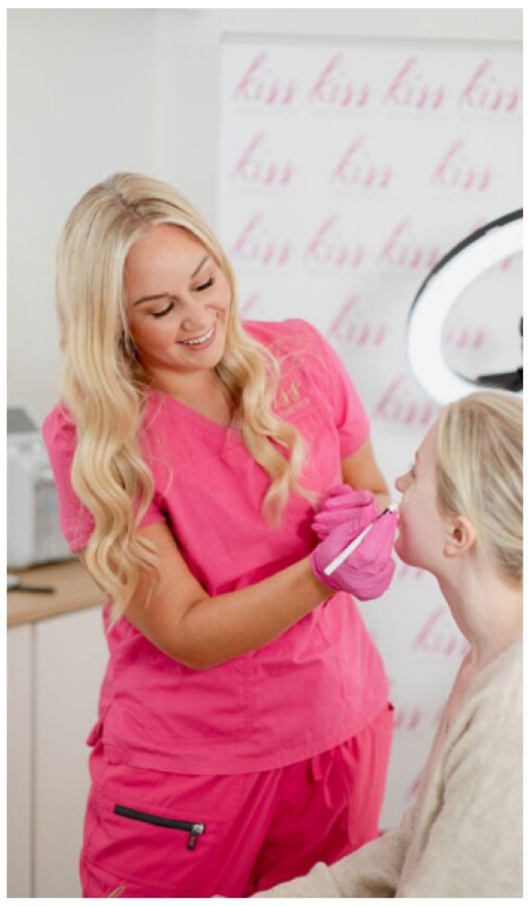
The Vegan Society want to help people make conscious choices in their beauty routines that are kinder to animals.
Their new campaign – Conscious Choices – aims to give you practical ways of showing compassion to animals in all areas of your life. Whether you're at the start of your vegan journey or an animal lover who wants to find out more, Conscious Choices is all about empowering you to choose health, hygiene and beauty products that are aligned with your values.

As part of the campaign, The Vegan Society has developed a free downloadable shopper's guide to help you consciously choose cosmetics in a way that is kinder to animals.
Scan the QR code to download the guide and take their cosmetics quiz for the chance to **win a Vegan Trademark beauty bundle worth up to £250!** Terms and conditions apply.
For more information, follow the hashtag **#ConsciousChoices** on social media and find out more about the campaign at **vegansociety.com/cosmo/consciouschoices**

YOUR SKIN DESERVES NOTHING BUT THE BEST!



Elevate your Summer skincare with Manjeri's Body Oil Collection, the radiant secret to a sun-kissed glow. Enjoy the perfect blend of hydration and glowing skin, enhancing your natural beauty.
Our SunGlow Shimmer Body Oil ensures a non-greasy, shimmering finish, perfect for beach adventures or poolside staycations. Manjeri Skincare promises a luxurious experience that nourishes and sparkles.
Unveil your glow today with the code "**RADIANT**" at **manjeriskincare.com**



KISS AESTHETICS

Kiss Aesthetics, owned by Antonia Knowles, operates 12 medic-led aesthetic clinics across the UK. We are award-winning celebrity aestheticians, specialising in using the golden ratio. When examining studies of the most beautiful women on the planet, we notice the golden ratio countless times across their faces. This is why, unlike other clinics, we utilise it to ensure that your natural beauty is safeguarded and preserved, so that your fear of looking 'overfilled' or 'judged' won't deny you the opportunity to restore your confidence. Join us in reshaping the narrative and empowering women with the confidence they deserve through non-surgical aesthetic treatments.
Instagram: @kiss_aesthetics
www.aekiss.com
Scan me for £10 OFF

BEAUTY EDIT

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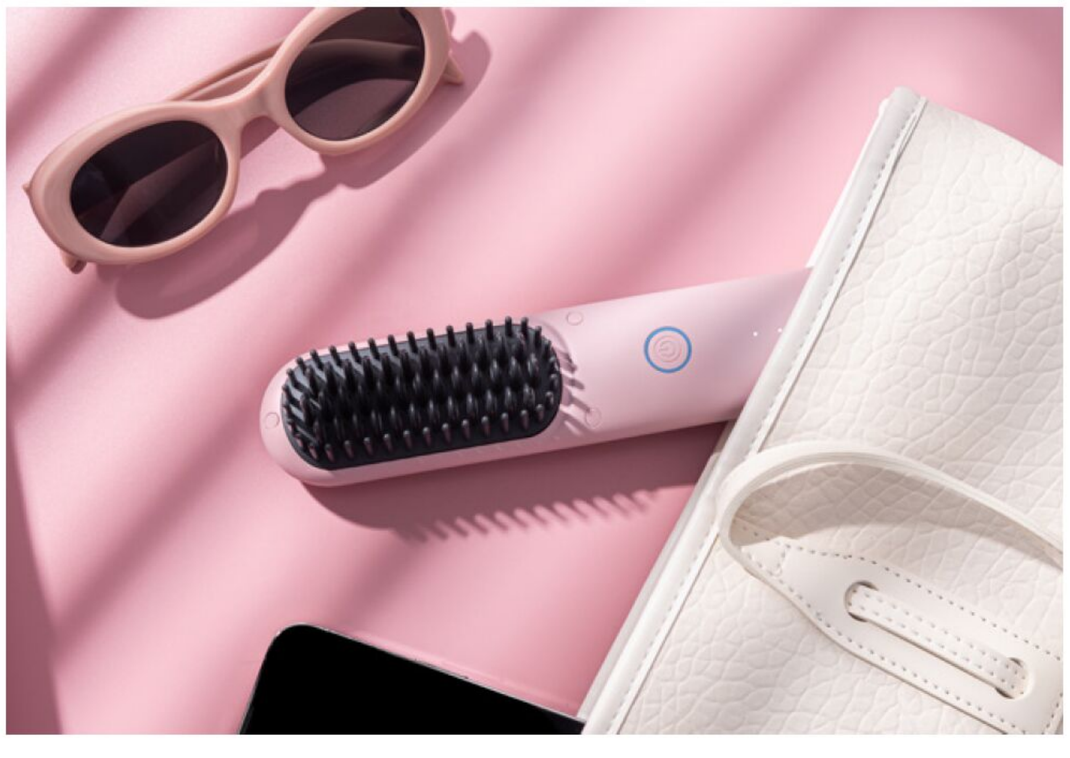
YOU'LL NEVER MISS A COMPLIMENT IN DLSB

The results are in… Hundreds of our gorgeous customers are already rocking our iconic looks this season, and being showered with compliments like confetti. Ready to join our DLSB Dolls? You know you are. Picture this: you strut into the room, make a beeline for the bar, grab a glass of bubbly, and bam! All eyes are on you. Why? Because you're wearing DLSB - of course. With prints that'll make your heart sing and figure-flattering silhouettes to hug you in all the right places, we're the perfect pick for all those special occasions you've RSVP'd to this season. Whether you're owning the dance floor in a sensational floor-sweeping maxi dress, or catching the bouquet (while wearing the bouquet) in a flirty floral midi, it'll be heads on swivel from the "I-do's" to the "Aga-do-do-do's". Head to our socials for easy-to-steal style inspo, and bag your finds with next day delivery well in time for those save-the-dates. Your what-to-wear woes will be happily never after. Ready to conquer the world? Stare-stealing styles, superpowered prints and endless "where did you get that's" await at **dlsb.co.uk**...

Exclusive **15% off** for Cosmo readers on your first order at **dlsb.co.uk** Use code '**COSMO15**' at checkout to apply.

TYMO PORTA PRO—EFFORTLESS STYLING ON-THE-GO

Introducing the **TYMO PORTA PRO**, a game-changing hair styler that's set to redefine your styling experience. Its cordless design, weighing even less than your smartphone, offers unparalleled convenience and portability, transforming your hair routine ON THE GO. With the power to transform your look in just **10 minutes**, it's your shortcut to endless hair possibilities.Obsessed by TikTok with over **800 million** views and recommended by top tier media such as TV show Good Morning America, it's the hottest styling tool of the moment.
Plus, with a battery life of 40 minutes and the ability to charge while in use, you can style non-stop without missing a beat.



The innovation doesn't stop here.Advanced ionic system and T-Gloss ceramic coating guarantee a friction-less glide, effectively reducing frizz by an impressive 50%. This isn't just a styling tool; it's a pocket-sized hair-care prodigy meticulously crafted to nurture your precious tresses.

TYMO PORTA PRO: where convenience meets style innovation. **Scan the code** to purchase with an exclusive **30% discount** by entering code **"COSMO30"** at checkout. Find out more at: **tymobeauty.com**

SCAN ME

BEAUTY EDIT

Look good, feel great

DISCOVER BEAUTY GODDESS, WHERE UNIQUE BEAUTY SHINES AND INDIVIDUALITY IS CELEBRATED.

We offer a premium collection of beauty essentials that encourage confidence and self-expression. Founded by the passionate mother-daughter team Stella and India, Beauty Goddess transforms luxury beauty into an accessible experience for everyone.

As a leading UK destination for top beauty brands, our extensive selection caters to both professional makeup artists and beauty enthusiasts. We blend innovation with a distinct UK flair, offering a wide range of skincare and makeup products designed for diverse beauty needs.

Recognized for our commitment to excellence, Beauty Goddess proudly holds prestigious accolades such as:

- Most Trusted Beauty Products eTailer UK – LUXlife Global Excellence Awards 2023
- Cosmetics Retailer of the Year – Corporate LiveWire Innovation & Excellence Awards 2024

These awards serve as a testament to our dedication to providing exceptional products and service to our valued customers.

Beauty Goddess is more than a brand; it's a legacy of passion, excellence, and growth, aiming to partner with innovative independent brands. Our family-like team emphasizes collaboration and genuine connections, making every interaction heartfelt.

Join us in exploring luxury beauty redefined.

Visit **beautygoddess.co.uk** and follow us on social media for exclusive deals: IG: **@beautygoddess_uk** | FB: **BeautyGoddessUK.**

COLOUR BY MAYA

Elevate your beauty routine with cbm. Eye Cream Concealer Peach, a true makeup innovation. This best-selling under eye concealer combines skincare benefits with colour correcting coverage to transform the appearance of dark, tired eyes. Highly commended 'Makeup Must Have' at the 2023 UK Beauty Awards, it's a powerhouse of anti-aging goodness with flawless concealing properties. Because let's face it, your canvas deserves the best! Dive into the radiant world of cbm. and discover how our commitment to empowering self-love can transform your beauty routine into a celebration of confidence.

Receive 20% off your first order and a bonus brush code: COSM20B | www.colourbymaya.com.au

LUST-WORTHY LASHES FROM SOSU COSMETICS

We all want fuller lashes without the hassle and SOSU Cosmetic's range of Hidden Agenda lashes are not only easy to apply but appear incredibly full on the eye. The lashes are specially designed for lash application underneath the natural lash line to create an undetectable finish.

The double lash clusters are super lightweight and allow complete customisation, so you can create your own eye look to suit your shape. With three different lash lengths, 10mm, 12mm and 14mm, these lashes are the perfect way to tailor your lash look, whether that's adding length or dimension – and the best thing? They can last up to three days.

Included with Hidden Agenda lashes is a super long-lasting under-lash adhesive, with an ultra-thin brush for precise application. It is designed to bond with your natural lash, resulting in an undetectable finish.

Shop SOSU Cosmetic's full lash collection on **www.sosucosmetics.com**.

BEAUTY EDIT

Look good, feel great

"UNLOCK THE RADIANCE WITHIN: DISCOVER THE BEAUTY OF YOUR SKIN AT OUR PREMIER CLINIC"

Welcome to our renowned beauty skin clinic, where transformation meets expertise. Nestled in the heart of Essex, we're dedicated to unveiling the true potential of your skin. Step into our sanctuary of rejuvenation and experience a world where science meets luxury.

At Skin Lab Beauty Clinic, we understand that beauty is more than skin deep—it's about confidence, empowerment, and self-care. Our team of experienced skincare experts, led by Magdalena Gouzd, tailor every treatment to your unique needs, ensuring that each visit is not just a service, but an experience crafted exclusively for you.

From advanced skincare treatments to personalised consultations, we offer a comprehensive range of services designed to address concerns ranging from acne to aging gracefully. Whether you seek to restore youthful vitality, combat stubborn blemishes, or simply pamper yourself with a revitalising facial, we have the perfect solution for you.

Indulge in a world of relaxation and results as our skilled professionals, including Magdalena Gouzd, guide you on a journey to healthier, more radiant skin. Join us at Skin Lab Beauty Clinic and discover the beauty of your skin anew. Book your appointment today and let your inner glow shine brighter than ever before.

To start your skincare journey with us by contacting on the following **+441708594139** or **WhatsApp +447424716505.**

https://skinlabbeautyclinic.com/

COLLAGEN SUPPLEMENTS THAT WORK AND TASTE GREAT

Chances are you've already heard about the beauty benefits of collagen supplements. Loved by industry insiders for its anti-ageing properties, collagen is a powerhouse ingredient clinically proven to help deliver firmer, more hydrated and smoother looking skin. Yet effective AND great-tasting collagen supplements were hard to find … until now.

SOLV Collagen Drink Supplements are a delicious way to support your skin, hair and nails from within, thanks to a daily dose of 8,000mg sustainably sourced type 1 marine collagen peptides, vitamin C and zinc. Available in three great-tasting flavours and conveniently packaged in individual sachets, they're designed to give you a quick and easy boost of skin-loving nutrients at home or on the go.

With premium ingredients and innovative formulas rigorously tested to make sure they're the best on the market, SOLV are on a mission to make great-tasting, effective supplements accessible for everyone.

Hundreds of verified 5 star Trustpilot reviews speak for themselves. Discover the SOLV difference today with 25% off your first purchase: use code COSMO25 at **www.wearesolv.com.**

Also available at Morrisons supermarkets nationwide (welcome offer only valid at **www.wearesolv.com.**)

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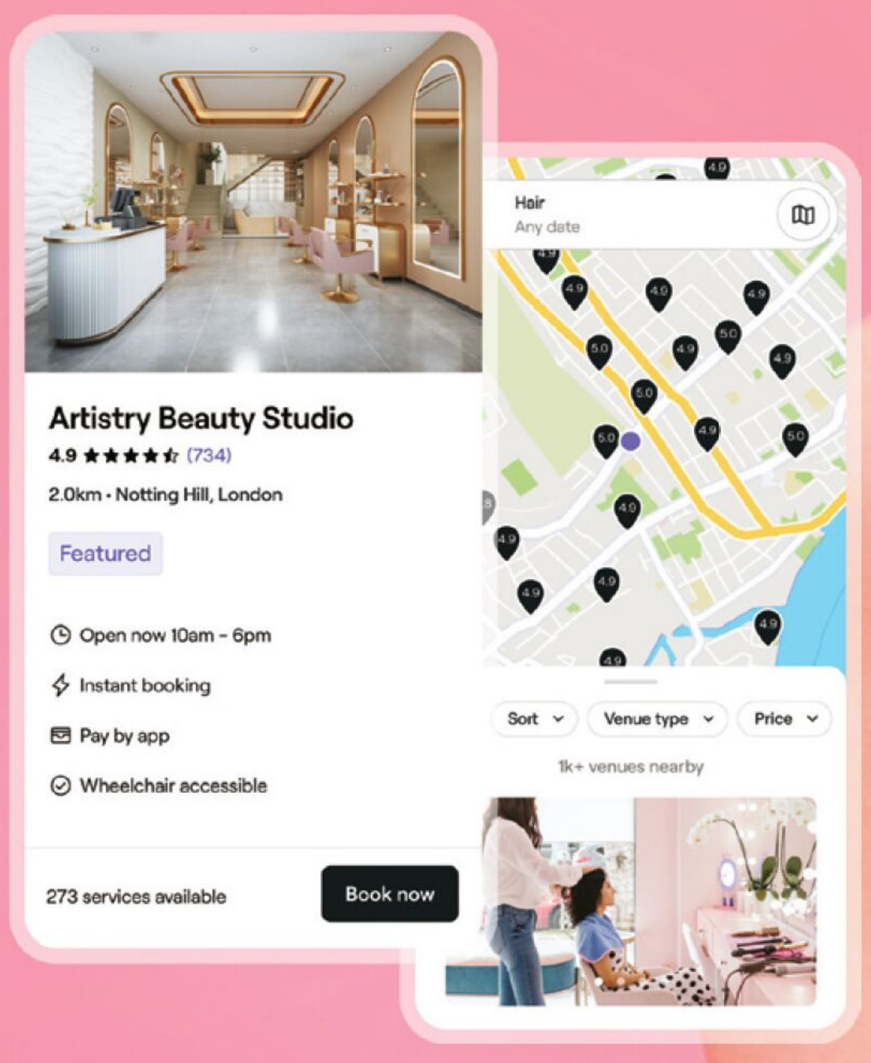

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Glen Powell is very good with brunch

The *Twisters* actor on his go-to meal, evening skincare routine and ragers with co-star Daisy Edgar-Jones

INTERVIEW: DUSTY BAXTER-WRIGHT

How would you describe your interior style?
I like stuff that feels lived in. My family have always had homes full of things that have a story behind them, and I like to get a sense of someone when you walk into their house.

When do you feel most at home?
I spend most of my time with my family in Austin. We have a ranch in East Texas and if I really want someone to get to know me, that turf is where you get the most sense of me.

What's on your go-to dinner party menu?
I have a smoker outside, so I cook a mean ribs and brisket, and breakfast tacos. Rather than a dinner scenario, I'm very good with a brunch. I feel like it's a very easy way to make everyone happy.

What does your evening skincare routine look like?
I'm still trying to figure that out. To be honest with you, 50% of the time I do one but most of the time I feel like I look weird and oily when I put stuff on. Most of my life I've just put water on my face, but now I'm starting to figure out my thing.

After you've showered, do you sit in your towel for half an hour or immediately get on with your day?
It sort of depends on if I have house guests. We've all lived with those people who stay in a towel for too long, and I don't want to be that guy. My parents are living with me right now, and working out with the people who trained me for *Top Gun* and *Anyone But You*... I'm really hoping that my dad doesn't start walking around in a towel.

Which of your co-stars throws the best parties?
Daisy Edgar-Jones. She's so rowdy and fun. We call her DJ EJ, because on the set of *Twisters*, she kept everyone pumped [with the music]. She throws these parties in London, and we share that love of hosting our friends. I'm hoping we can co-host one and make a true rager.

Do you have a signature cocktail?
A Mezcal negroni. It's a great night-starter. You don't want to be drinking them all night – friend to friend here – but I would say one or two, and then go a little cleaner, otherwise you're going to be hurting in the morning.

What's your favourite way to spend a day off?
I like gathering people together for fun, outdoorsy things. If you're not really deliberate about having fun, you can feel like you're working all the time. I get filled up by activity and most people would describe me as pretty high energy.

***Hit Man* will be on Netflix on 7 June. *Twisters* is in cinemas on 19 July**

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